

Social Mobility, Migratory Vocations, and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association

I ALICE YEH is the programme manager of the East Asia Program at Cornell University. Formerly, she was a teaching fellow in social sciences at the University of Chicago, where she completed her PhD in anthropology in 2022. 140 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, United States (ay365@cornell.edu).

ABSTRACT: This paper explores how the confessional politics of Catholic identification has been mobilised into religious callings, from the village to the city and from China to Overseas Chinese communities. Building on fieldwork conducted in Hangzhou and New York City in 2018, I show how a Chinese Catholic migrant priest authenticates the spiritual purity of his vocation by using the legality and ease of transnational travel to legitimise his moral and economic upward mobility.

KEYWORDS: mobility, migration, Catholicism, vocation, transnational China.

This paper submits that the clerical construction of spiritual authenticity via transnational mobility is among the affordances of a sinicized Catholicism. By “sinicized,” I mean less a Catholicism “with Chinese characteristics” than one that has had to adaptively respond to the program of sinicization associated with Xi Jinping’s 习近平 “New Era” (Madsen 2019; Maslákova and Satorová 2019). In professing to “listen to” or “follow” God, members of the Chinese state-sanctioned Patriotic Catholic Association (PCA) defer domestic and international suspicions of spiritual impurity while moving upward socially and spiritually. To illustrate how sinicization enables outcomes that exceed its political aim to indigenise Christianity, I take as a case study a Chinese Catholic priest’s account of how God “planned” his passage to North America. This paper engages with a reflexive anthropology of Christianity (Cannell 2005; Robbins 2014) that accounts for the context-dependency of local (and global) Christianities without essentialising them as tokens of a Christianity inseparable from Western modernity. In doing so, it resists the assumptions that “sinicizing” Christianity means making it less Christian, and that economic aims contradict spiritual aims.

Father Chen Sheng’an deploys the Roman Catholic Church’s international authority against the Canadian border authorities who would seek to restrict his access, mobilising both his calling and the supranational and supernatural authority of his divine caller. This feat of mobility makes transparent the vocational economy of the PCA vis-à-vis the more hidden, unofficial routes that members of underground churches must take. The contrasts identified by Father (hereafter Fr) Chen – PCA vs. underground, scholars vs. soldiers

– manifest in how he makes sense of and confessionalises his mobility. The interwoven upward, transnational, and confessional styles of this mobility have made possible his journey from a Shaanxi village to New York City.

This paper asks: how do PCA priests “called” to a life in the West conceive of social and international mobility as a spiritual practice? This question intervenes in scholarly studies of Chinese Catholicism that frame Catholicism as a largely village-based phenomenon trying to come to terms with global modernity. While Protestant Christianity has classically and consistently been associated with modernity and progress in China and elsewhere (Weber 2001; Keane 2007; Lian 2010; Cao 2011; Harkness 2013; van der Veer 2014), scholarship on contemporary Chinese Catholicism has either focused on its rural and village manifestations (Lozada 2001; Harrison 2011, 2013) or questioned its contribution to civil society (Madsen 1998). The anthropological study of Christianity is fertile ground for examining agency and the encounter with modernity (Engelke and Tomlinson 2006; Handman 2014).

Methods

Data in this paper were collected during 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Hangzhou and New York City, from 2017 to 2018. I conducted 25 life history interviews with priests and parishioners. After learning that several priests had left Hangzhou for the United States, I redirected the final two months of fieldwork to New York City, because parishioners at Hangzhou’s Midtown

Catholic Church¹ had informed me that at least two of their priests were now living in New York. Although my time in New York City in no way matches my time in Hangzhou, it made possible this paper's transnational perspective on the mutually resonant commitments of an ethnic and religious community spread across nation-states.

I describe the contours of Fr Chen's vocational trajectory. I analyse an interview in which he describes a time he was "miraculously" granted entry into Canada despite being caught with an invalid visa at the airport. I borrow the concept of confessional mobility from Liesbeth Corens' (2019) study of English Catholic expatriates. Despite the vast separation in time and space between Counter-Reformation England and "New Era" China, confessional mobility is a productive lens through which to explore the affordances of Catholic emigration. English Catholic expatriates were not merely exiles and refugees; they actively participated in and sustained the English Catholic community from abroad. The confessionality of their mobility is due in great part to the inherent transnationalism of the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic" church (Corens 2019: 29). For Chinese Catholics overseas, the transnational nature of the Catholic Church is likewise built into their confessionality.

In China, the years after the cultural and economic liberalisation of the 1990s to the mid-2010s (Zhang and Ong 2008; Chau 2019), but before the Covid-19 pandemic, mark a transitional period in church-state relations: weakened collusion between Christian elites and local officials, the removal of crosses from churches, and hints of warming ties between Beijing and the Vatican. These years mark, as well, changes in Chinese views of the United States: with Donald Trump as president, many Chinese professionals began to reconsider their ambitions to travel to or work in the United States. I show that for PCA priests such as Fr Chen, the boundary between official and underground churches, and between Beijing and the Vatican, is flexible. On the one hand, the way forward is to be what Rey Chow calls a "protesting ethnic" (2002), or to co-opt an arguably normative Western human rights discourse of dissent. On the other hand, it is to appeal to Chinese state-validated identity documentation. Here, PCA priests are at an advantage. This paper describes how transnational mobility can be achieved through the vocational economy of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association.

"We Chinese have got to follow the law"

On the frosted November 2018 morning of my interview with Fr Chen Sheng'an, I sat waiting in the tiny lobby of the rectory of St Anthony's Church, a Roman Catholic church in a Chinese neighbourhood in Queens. Another young woman was waiting to meet with him. Tired and shivering, we passed the time with chit-chat. She told me she was there to ask for a character reference to include in her green card application. She had been brought over from Fuzhou to be reunited with her family only very recently, she said. Her younger sister, born in the United States, was an American citizen. As she showed me her sister's sunny college snapshots on her smartphone, the door to Fr Chen's office swung open, a visitor walked out, and Fr Chen called her in. The door shut. They didn't take very long. I didn't hear anything she said, but I distinctly overheard him haranguing her in a piercing voice: "We Chinese have got to follow the law [and] immigrate in a more legitimate

way" (*Women Zhongguoren yao anzhaofa, yimin yao zhenggui yidian* 我們中國人要按照法律, 移民要正規一點).

When it was my turn to be shown into the office, Fr Chen remarked that he was regularly and relentlessly approached with requests to put in a good word for a new arrival with few connections. His tone did not sound promising. He had no ties to Fuzhou, and he must have heard, over and over again, the same story about an unbaptised person who grew up in a non-practising Catholic family that had been Catholic for three, four, five, six generations. The young woman had related this very story to me while we were waiting. Fr Chen, however, affirmed mutual membership only at the broadest level of "we Chinese," and he did so, it seems, to chide her for asking a favour. His statement contains the presuppositions that (1) Chinese people tend to break the law and (2) Chinese people do not immigrate legally.

And yet, as he would soon go on to relate, his own experience with border police at a Canadian airport would seem to confirm these very presuppositions. How does the secular politics of upward mobility intersect with the Catholic vocation or religious calling? Material security, comfort, and travel are no minor considerations for a seminarian, whether in Sri Lanka (Brown 2020) or China. In everyday Catholic parlance, the vocation – *shengzhao* 聖召 or "holy summons" in Mandarin Chinese – refers to one's calling to religious life, usually the priesthood. "We've been low on vocations for years," a parish administrator might say, referring to the dwindling number of new priests. Max Weber distinguishes the English word *calling* in the sense of "a person's specialized and sustained activity that is normally his source of income and (...) the economic basis of his existence" (2001: 179, footnote 1) as a broadly Protestant, specifically Lutheran, invention; prior to the Reformation, *vocatio* and other ascetic terms referred to the evangelical call to otherworldly salvation. This was a calling away from the this-worldly work of "making a living," which involves embedding oneself in the contemporary social and political order.

For Fr Chen as for the young woman he chided, the connection between being Catholic and being upwardly, transnationally mobile is not without tension. What kind of passage does the religious vocation foreclose and afford through the "iron cage" (Parsons' translation of Weber's *stahlhartes Gehäuse*) or "steel-hard casing" (Kalberg's translation) of global capitalism? In contexts where Catholicism is associated with femininity and poverty, as in Mexico, "Protestant values" often emerge in opposition as modern, masculine, and American (Lester 2005: 12, 297). In urban China, the Protestant-Catholic opposition can be seen in the rural/urban stereotypes of the male religious professional: the homely, stiff Catholic priest from a northern village whose Mandarin is tinged with a countryside accent versus the handsome, married, eloquent Protestant pastor whose polished demeanour and picture-perfect family reflect a wholesome, urbane modernity. As a Chinese scholar of Christianity once told me, "You need to know that Chinese priests aren't like those impressive, well-educated foreign priests. Totally different." This contempt is shared by many urban

1. The names of all churches in which I conducted fieldwork, and the individuals I met there, are anonymised.

and peri-urban parishioners. Some PCA intellectuals attribute the insufficiently sinicized Catholicism of these priests – in other words, their failure to accommodate socialist politics and culture – to their low educational level and cultural “backwardness” (Lu et al. 2015). Priests are often rural outsiders in their own dioceses, respected for little apart from their sacramental function. No urban family, no matter how devout, would easily let a son enter the priesthood (Madsen 2003: 481). On the one hand, the priestly vocation reaffirms the inexorability of class divisions by having a man “withdraw” from the global capitalist cage (or casing) to pursue higher status in an alternative, divine order. On the other hand, it subverts class rigidity by permitting him to move through the interstices of the rural/urban divide.

Trained as catechists and confessors, priests are skilled in the art of discernment in the Catholic sense of figuring out God’s will and discovering how best to pursue God’s plan for their lives. In the case of Fr Chen, “following God’s plan” is a way of negotiating risks and roadblocks by discursively deferring one’s own agency. Fr Chen situates his calling as the migratory, supranational will to follow. Despite the difference in context with Corens’ (2019) research, confessional mobility is a productive lens through which to explore the affordances of Catholic emigration. Corens argues that English expatriates’ English identity was strengthened, not diluted, by their transnationalism. What makes their mobility confessional is the Catholic ecclesiology of collaborative salvation and the transnationalism of the Roman Catholic Church (Corens 2019: 29).

Central to many Catholic justifications of emigration is the semi-schismatic status of the Chinese Catholic Church. Relations between China and the Vatican were broken off in 1951, when the Chinese government deported the apostolic nuncio from Nanjing to Hong Kong. From the Communist Party’s point of view, Chinese Catholics were reclaiming their own church in the context of a broader revolution against Western imperialism.² In July 1956, the first Chinese Catholic congress of representatives met in Beijing; a subsequent meeting in February 1957 established the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association. When the priests of Hankou and Wuchang elected their own bishops in 1958, the Vatican declared the appointments invalid and threatened excommunication. Chinese representatives protested this condemnation; henceforth, each diocese would elect and ordain its own bishops. By 1962, the year the Second Vatican Council was convened, there were 50 such bishops across China.

State suspicions of compromised loyalty have followed Catholics in China, as they often have elsewhere, more fixedly than they have followed Protestants, who usually confess nondenominationality or nondenominational evangelicalism, and whose choice of fellowship tends less to be viewed as symptomatic of foreign collusion.³ The “Three-Self” principles (self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation) shared by all state-sanctioned churches in China are structurally easier for Protestants unaffiliated with any transnational denomination to practise, whereas the orthopractic condition of being in communion with Rome can be, and has been, politically compromising. Protestants citing religious persecution from the Chinese government focus mainly on persecution and the curtailment of religious expression; Catholics will add to these the impossibility of practising their faith at all, from receiving valid

and licit sacraments to being coerced, before the One Child policy ended in 2016, to using contraceptive and abortive measures (Guest 2003: 142).

Whether at state-affiliated churches in China or their underground counterparts, choice of church membership is generally acknowledged to be determined by social accident: you attend whatever church your family and friends attend. During my fieldwork, I observed that both converts and cradle Catholics rationalised their membership in the same way: it was simply the circumstance in which they found themselves. Attending a Patriotic, not an underground, church is no mark against your piety. To many observers outside China, however, choice of church corresponds to your degree of persecution, firmness of faith, and stance toward the state. Not surprisingly, religious professionals fall under greater scrutiny. In her monograph *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Rey Chow views China and the West as “collaborative partners” whose transactions make of human beings, abstracted into the form of “human rights,” the prime commodity of global late capitalism (2002: 20). Chow claims that it is through the moral register of protest that “ethnics” can be heard, and can get ahead, in the global market: “protesting constitutes the economically logical and socially viable vocation for them to assume” (2002: 48). Once in the United States, your choice of church is transformed from social accident into ethical stance.

Human commodity-trafficking sets up tolerance as the condition of possibility for the moral maintenance of boundaries, ethnic and otherwise (Chow 2002: 28-9). Relatedly, Christian discourse on migration has largely been concerned with the hospitality – how much, of what kind, and for how long – due to refugees (Pohl 2003; Cruz 2011; Campese 2012). According to Chow, American humanitarians and the Chinese state alike are complicit in the traffic in Chinese political prisoners and dissidents because these subjects perform, by virtue of their Chineseness and proven record of protest, their moral and economic value. But states are not the only or always primary agents. “Dissidents” themselves are also movers and collaborators (both with and against the state), and the risk that inheres in their actions and stances is, under this same logic of trafficking, a kind of capital that can be exchanged for refugee status and legal security. This risk (e.g., of arrest, imprisonment) can at times be mobilised against the state regimes that produce it.

2. “Patriotic” Catholic activity can be traced back to 1914, when Chinese Catholics in Tianjin criticised the French for using church construction as a pretence to advance the French concession’s demands. Catholic activists also joined the May Fourth Movement. In 1950, the Holy See warned that participation in certain Communist Party-sponsored organisations would result in excommunication. In response, revolutionary initiatives such as Fr Wang Liangzuo’s “Guangyuan Declaration of Catholic Self-Reformation” (*Guangyuan tianzhujiao zili gexin yundong xuanyan* 廣元天主教自立革新運動宣言) won popular support. Antonio Riberi, the apostolic nuncio to China, circulated a letter opposing the proposed reforms. In March 1951, Fr Li Weiguang and 783 priests, nuns, and laypeople cosigned a declaration denouncing Western imperialism and Vatican interference. Charged with espionage, Riberi was expelled from China that November. Undeterred, the Vatican continued to “slander” the anti-imperialist movement by calling it “persecution” (*jiao nan* 教難). Counterrevolutionaries, the Bishop of Shanghai (later Cardinal) Ignatius Kung Pin-Mei 龔品梅 included, were punished for treason.
3. Because many underground Protestant churches are affiliated with homegrown denominations and organisations, membership in an underground Protestant church is associated not so much with overseas loyalties and unpatriotic sentiment as with “superstitious” thinking and “cultish” tendencies.

Like other advocacy networks, churches alter the relationship that individuals can have with the state by providing them with the promise, in theory if not in practice, of transnational resources and attention (Keck and Sikkink 1999). Pun aside, Chow's protesting ethnic has little direct interaction with Christianity, the concepts of "soul" and "humanity" notwithstanding, that is distinguishable from the all-consuming captivity of capitalism. How might migrant ethnics themselves make sense of and manage their own routes? For a minority, taking up a self-referential gesture, writes Chow,

is often tantamount to performing a confession in the criminal as well as noncriminal sense: it is to say, "Yes, that's me," to a call and a vocation – "Hey, Asian!" "Hey, Indian!" "Hey, gay man!" – as if it were a crime with which one has been charged; it is to admit and submit to the allegations (of otherness) that society at large has made against one. (Chow 2002: 115)

Recall Fr Chen's uncharitable presuppositions about new arrivals from China. "We Chinese have got to follow the law [and] immigrate in a more legitimate way," he says. Is it possible for the migrant to "confess" in terms not already overdetermined by the self-ethnicizing lens of captive otherness? This question lies at the heart of "sinicization." By way of response, I examine the confessional mobility of Fr Chen, a "runaway" priest from Hangzhou's Midtown Catholic Church.

A case study of confessional mobility

Fr Chen Sheng'an is a lively man in his early fifties. Originally from a village in Shaanxi Province, he now works as a parochial vicar at St Anthony's Church in New York City. He is tasked with serving the Chinese-speaking community in Queens. He left China in 2004 to pursue advanced theological training in the Philippines. Long-time parishioners at Midtown Catholic Church, one of the oldest churches in Zhejiang Province, remember him as a good talker, taller, handsomer, and more extroverted than the other priests. Capable and charismatic, he was driven by an insatiable yearning for further study. Ten years later, he would be pursuing a postsecondary degree in the United States. Now safely settled in New York City, Fr Chen has neither contact nor desire for contact with former superiors and coworkers at Midtown.

How did Chen Sheng'an, a peasant without an affluent urban background, family connections, or white-collar skills get into the United States at all? How does the priestly vocation provide an alternative path to becoming the type of "high-quality" Chinese (Jacka 2009) with the educational and economic means to make it overseas as the high-skilled worker that American policymakers claim to welcome? By vocational economy, I refer to the ways in which confessional and upward mobilities intersect. Getting out of the countryside and into the city is the first step. Priests at churches across China – urban churches especially – are often not native to their diocese. It was no different at Midtown when I conducted fieldwork there in 2017 and 2018. The typical priest hails from a Catholic village (Lozada 2001; Harrison 2013) where, as many parishioners would say, "the faith is firm, not lukewarm like it is here [in Hangzhou]." Spoken of with great admiration and romantic yearning, these villages are nostalgic sites of spiritual purity and

rustic simplicity. Many priests and nuns, possibly the majority,⁴ come from villages like these (Madsen 2003).

Figure 1. A Catholic village in Shaanxi Province, a few hours from Xi'an by bus. The dome of the village church is visible behind the newer two-story homes on the right.



Source: photo taken by the author, February 2018.

Like rural migrants elsewhere in China, they are eager to seek their fortunes in distant cities. The typical priest is a younger son, often a second son, in a family with multiple children.⁵ (The eldest son is expected to marry and pass on the family name.) Signing away his future after high school to a diocese – say, one in an affluent metropolis such as Hangzhou or Shanghai – is a practical way of ensuring a secure (albeit humble) financial future and higher (albeit alternative) social status. In an article on vocational motivations in Sri Lanka, Bernardo Brown vividly asks his readers to "consider this for a moment: if you enter the Seminary, you will have *nothing* to worry about, *everything* will be taken care of" (2020: 636). Chen Sheng'an signed away his future to the archdiocese of Hangzhou and was sent to be trained at a seminary in Shanghai, all expenses paid.

4. I have not personally met a Chinese priest, seminarian, or nun who did not come from a rural background. Madsen observes that "at the seminary at Sheshan, close to Shanghai, one of the best seminaries in China that draws its students from across the nation, most seminarians in the 1980s came from Shanghai itself. Now, very few come from there. Almost all come from rural areas" (2003: 481, footnote 38).
5. Prior to the end of the One Child policy in 2016, many village families had multiple children to meet the demands of agricultural labour, guarantee the survival of at least one child, or obtain a son (Greenhalgh 1993).

Midyear in 2018 I was informed that at least three priests formerly at Midtown were now living in the United States. Two of them, Fr Chen and Fr Guo, were “somewhere in New York” and one of them, Fr Lu, was in Los Angeles. All had left under questionable circumstances. Fr Chen was on very poor terms with Midtown. Fr Lu believed that Chinese government agents were tracking him. Unfamiliar accounts had attempted to add him on WeChat. On paper, Midtown was still his formal *danwei* 單位 or work unit. Everyone at Midtown knew that the three intended to remain in the United States. When I asked Fr Chen for an interview in late 2018, I half-expected him to decline. His situation was, after all, sensitive and uncertain. To my surprise, he was eager to talk. He asked if I was “from the media.” I said I was not.

The interview began with Fr Chen asking me where in Hangzhou I was from. I explained that I wasn’t actually from Hangzhou; I was just an “ABC” or “American-born Chinese,” but I had been living in Hangzhou for a year. He asked me what I thought of Midtown. I sensed that he was angling for a critical opinion. Afraid to accidentally offend, I repeated a dull truism I had often heard: that churches in Northern China were livelier, and that the faith in the south, such as in Hangzhou and such as at Midtown, felt rather lukewarm – or so I had been told.

“That’s not it,” he said. “The Hangzhou situation is very messy. It’s very bad there, very complicated. Nothing’s changed in 20 years. What were your feelings?”

I said I didn’t know. I admitted that despite how welcoming everyone was, I felt like I could never really become one of them.

“You of course couldn’t become one of them! I was there for over ten years, and I couldn’t become one of them!”

“But you worked there,” I countered, “and you’re a priest.”

“They’re very exclusionary (*paiwai* 排除). If you’re not from Hangzhou (*Hangzhouren* 杭州人), you’ll never become one of them. I’m a very frank person. I don’t know how that suits you, but I’m a lot like Joseph Zen 陳日君 – again, I don’t know what you think about that.”

I quickly added that I admired Joseph Zen. That seemed to put him at ease. Cardinal Joseph Zen, the outspoken anti-Beijing, pro-democracy bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, is a name often cited by human rights activists, the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, and critics of China. Fr Chen went on to say that the PCA was “very strong” in Hangzhou, that the Midtowners worked for the government, not for the Church.

“What the pope says never changes,” he said, referencing the then-recent agreement by the Vatican to recognise the legitimacy of bishops appointed and ordained without a papal mandate.⁶ “But the [Chinese] government (...) and Trump, too – one day it’s this, the next day it’s that. Of course the Vatican and Beijing’s provisional agreement is a good thing, but it’s useless. ‘秀才遇到兵’ (*xiucai yudao bing*) – do you know what comes next?”

I didn’t.

“Ah, you are an ABC after all,” he said. “I really thought you were a *Hangzhouren*. It’s ‘有理說不清’ (*you li shuo bu qing*) ‘*Xiucan yudao bing*, *you li shuo bu qing*.’ Do you understand?”

I was embarrassed. The gist of the couplet was that you couldn’t argue with idiots or reason with brute force: “A scholar meeting a soldier has no means of reasoning [with him].” I felt as though I had failed the vetting. At the same time, it was hard for me to believe that Fr Chen really thought that I, whose Mandarin was passable but non-native, was from Hangzhou. What exactly was his message?

Although Fr Chen and I treated each other as impartial interlocutors, in practice we were both trying to signal that we were on each other’s side – while trying to figure out what that side was. I wanted Fr Chen to feel comfortable talking to me; Fr Chen wanted to prove his confessional alignment. On paper, he was a Patriotic priest. By definition, he was not “underground,” not persecuted, not a dissident, not any of the ethno-ethical types of persons whose political suppression and suffering mark them as deserving of passage to and refuge in the United States. In the following transcript of a four-minute excerpt from my interview with him, Fr Chen recounts a time he entered Canada on his way back to the United States. Having unknowingly used up, on his way out, the single entry on his Canadian visa, he could not enter Canada on his way back. Indirectly addressing the widespread sentiment among many Chinese Catholics that the Patriotics (members of the PCA) are fakes whose fear of the Communist Party overrides their loyalty to the pope, Fr Chen slips into a narrative of confessional mobility: caught at the border, he enacts the persona of a guileless dependent of God and testifies to the futility of human planning.

Figure 2. Excerpt from an interview with Fr Chen, Sections 1.1 to 1.18⁷

1.1	I (can) ⁸ tell you yet another thing. [When] I got [here] to America, I got in without a visa.
1.2	What year was this?
1.3	Ha, it happened in the past few years. So – God – (the most important thing is) [that] God plans. You cannot help but assist what God has planned. In America you probably can’t find someone like me – a seldom found, [who] can even get in without a visa.
1.4	Yeah, true. So – now you are, [you] do have a visa.
1.5	Although – now my visa, [I] do have a visa. Yeah, I have a visa now. But in the past [it was the case that] I got in without a visa. The customs said, <i>ai</i> ⁹ how could [you], without a visa [how] could you get back?

6. See Jason Horowitz and Ian Johnson, “China and Vatican Reach Deal on Appointment of Bishops,” *The New York Times*, 22 September 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/22/world/asia/china-vatican-bishops.html> (accessed on 23 May 2023).

7. This excerpt occurs over an hour into the interview, from 1:16 to 1:20 in the audio recording. It took place at the parish office of St Anthony’s Church, on 21 November 2018. I am providing only the English translation.

8. I follow basic conventions of conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Words inside single parentheses are words that were not entirely clear to me; they are close approximations or my best guesses. Empty parentheses represent recorded speech that is indiscernible, or that I am not able to transcribe. Words inside double parentheses indicate non-verbal behaviours or sounds. The equal sign indicates the seamless continuousness of different speakers’ speech. Bracketed words are added to improve the grammatical flow of the English translation.

9. An interjection indicating surprise and/or disapproval.

1.6	((laugh))
1.7	() =
1.8	= they still let you =
1.9	= they still let me in! That's right! [It's that] I left, without a visa, [and] got back. I had no idea. I said, I (also) have no idea, I went on a pilgrimage – after I got back, the parish said, <i>ai</i> , how could you () At the time it was like this. [It was that] I, I, I got to Canada. The Canadian visa, it's valid for three months [right?], then I took this visa and off I went. Ran off to Europe. When I got back, I said, <i>ai</i> don't I have a visa? They said, your visa, where is it? I said I, this is my visa, I [left] from Canada, on the way back I took – they said on top here [it's] written "single entry-exit." [When] you came back you had already used up your entry. [When] you get to other countries – [you] absolutely have to – from that country's visa reapply [to] return. This is their requirement.
1.10	Oh, understood.
1.11	Right? They said, your visa, where is it? I said it's right here! I said it's still valid! They said, you already used up the validity. Entry, exit-entry is one time, you already used it. So they didn't come to this ()... I waited at the airport for three hours, three to four hours.
1.12	Really?
1.13	Really.
1.14	Later there was an interview right?
1.15	Interview – they asked me already. I just said, I'm a priest, I went on pilgrimage. [And] then, well, I didn't know this, that I couldn't enter. So then they said, OK, Father, they said, we'll give you special permission this time, but you better not ever dare to say it like this. Because you didn't, you, this way you are breaking our law. So we, we are letting you in, we are also of course () breaking the law. But we are accommodate – accommodating you, (after all) you are a priest. We are letting only you in. But if [it were] someone else, [we'd] definitely send – [that person] back.
1.16	Right.
1.17	[Now] you understand [right?]. They – these inside ones aren't those normal ones those, those entry – those, those-those-those police [I mean]. [It's] upper-level personnel [that] came to talk to me. So in the future [I] better not dare exit again. If you[r situation is] such ((taps table to emphasise each word)), don't [you] dare exit. [Now] you know [right?]. So I, I, I'm possibly one of very few, [who] got back in without a visa.
1.18	Right right right this is very hard.

From Fr Chen's point of view, God arranges all things. "You cannot help but assist what God has planned," he says in 1.3. My responses in 1.2 and 1.4 are off the mark. Fr Chen is not shy about emphasising his perceived exceptionalism: "In America you probably can't find someone like me (...) who can even get in without a visa" (1.3). Again missing the mark, I attempt to angle for a confirmation of his current legal status: "So – now you are,

[you] do have a visa" (1.4). Fr Chen swaps out my conjunction "so" (*suoyi* 所以) with "although" (*suiran* 雖然). It is a correction: not "so, my visa" (end of story), but "although my visa..." (the start of a story) (1.5). I had implicitly and patronisingly assumed that the goal of his journey was the material reward, in the form of a visa, of legal residence in the United States. Fr Chen accepts my acknowledgement of his (now-)legal status and disarms an assumed end, the obtainment of a visa, by pitting against it the border-bending, will-bending sway of the calling.

You li shuo bu qing: *The scholar converts the soldier?*

How do you get to where God has called you to be? Fr Chen had me understand that Midtown did not want him back, that his prospects in China were as lost as a scholar attempting to reason with a soldier. The contrast between scholar and soldier is scaled up to the contrast between the Vatican and Beijing, between the supranational authority of the Church and the arbitrary policies of secular governments. Seen through this contrast, the truth or logic of confessional mobility is unintelligible to the guardians of the border; there is no use in trying to reason with state functionaries.

Fr Chen sounds nonchalant about bureaucratic entry laws and even gleeful about beating the odds when he insists that "you cannot help but assist what God has planned" (1.3). Legal and law-abiding green card holders are sometimes turned away for no known reason, he says later (1.19). Fr Chen's naïve trust in his vocational mobility ("I said, I [also] have no idea, I went on a pilgrimage (...)") [1.9], "I just said, I'm a priest, I went on pilgrimage" [1.15]) indexes a sacred, alternative locus of authority against which secular legality loses its bite. Fr Chen indirectly appeals to the international jurisdiction of the Catholic Church, blurring the borders between sovereign states. In doing so, he binds the border agents within the range of hearers – myself included – for whom ecclesial jurisdiction overrides earthly divisions. He does this in a disarmingly matter-of-fact way: "I just said, I'm a priest, I went on pilgrimage." This simplicity suggests a characterological indisposition to scheming and cheating: how could somebody like me, he seems to be asking, be cunning enough to go anywhere I was not meant to go?

Fr Chen does not want to look like he fought or laboured greatly for his passage. That might make him seem acquisitive and scheming. Rather, he submits to God, who does the work for him (see 1.23, below). The gloomy socioeconomic subtext of Fr Chen's passage across the border may be that working hard and following the rules might not get you very far. If lawful green card holders can be arbitrarily denied entry, why bother trying if you are just a poor peasant? Urbanites seldom deign to accept you as one of them anyway (Zhan 2011). Only God can get you somewhere: the vocation is a way out of the low status and quality of life associated with agricultural work and migrant labour.

By claiming to be an exception to the rule (see 1.3, 1.17, 1.19), Fr Chen shows that he is not entirely naïve: he stresses the discerning power, partly exaggerated and partly desired, of North American border agents. As Rihan Yeh observes in metapragmatic talk about U.S. visa interviews among upwardly mobile Mexican

applicants, the belief that the would-be visitor's authentic identity is transparent to and recognised by the American state is belied by the class habitus the successful applicant has spent years cultivating (Yeh 2018: 162-4). In fact, the ideal applicant is the one who can get away *without* the necessary documents (Yeh 2018: 162) – not unlike Fr Chen, whose trustworthiness, heightened by his priestly status, is recognised by state agents in spite of his invalid visa.

At first glance, there appears to be a face-off between the optical, evidentiary logic of authentication held by the aspirational middle-class visa applicant and the antirational, divine pull of the vocation. But as Fr Chen goes on to relate, the logic of authentication is undermined by the very agents designated to ensure its functioning. The fact that border police practise some level of discretionary authority (Côté-Boucher 2015) in cases such as this one is never acknowledged. Notice how Fr Chen brushes off my derailing question about the "interview" (1.14): "they asked me already" (1.15). Fr Chen's simple profession suffices: "I just said, I'm a priest, I went on pilgrimage" (1.15). Asserting the innocent irreducibility of his priestly person against the "data-double" of the airport-filtered passenger (Adey 2008: 145), Fr Chen rejects the exam-like dissection of self, biography, and motive by Canadian border security even while confirming its authenticating gaze.

Behind the urgent prayer requests in Midtown's WeChat groups, rumours about someone who gets in trouble with Chinese or foreign authorities often spawn off-group speculation. Was said person too naïve? Or perhaps not actually called? According to these chatgroup members, however unjust, unfair, and corrupt the Chinese or American governments may be, they are rarely "stupid." They are "very smart," "very formidable," and their actions "always have a reason." The way forward, vocationally, is to respect the law and work through its channels; all will fall into place "if it is in God's will." The insinuation may be that those who scheme, as opposed to those who listen, are the ones who must justify themselves. Those called by God have only to declare the simple truth: "I just said, I'm a priest, I went on pilgrimage" (1.15). They often do not pay out of pocket: fellowships and financial aid from overseas schools and churches, along with generous donations from the faithful, see their journeys through. Confessional mobility enables Fr Chen to enjoy a key privilege of middle-class prosperity: the ease, if not the swiftness, of legal passage. As Fr Chen goes on to relate, it is "upper-level" airport security (1.17) who decide to break the law and then confess, to a priest, the crime that they are at that moment committing!

The reported speech of the upper-level personnel (1.15) would seem to buttress the claim that airports are not just sieves that sort and filter difference – that is, "wanted from unwanted flows and high- and low-risk identities" (Adey 2008: 148) – but that they are also places where such difference is intentionally created (ibid.: 146). "We are letting only you in" (1.15), say the personnel, singling him out. Fr Chen's used-up entry is not a matter of doubt to anyone. He was to have been rationally filtered out. But when he *does* get in, it is not through a loophole or system error, nor through the last-minute discovery that his visa has in fact one entry remaining, as might be expected in a "that was close!" tale of luck. Instead, he claims that he is arbitrarily given "special permission" by the "inside ones" (1.17).

Nor did he, as he tells it, knowingly take his chances. Why

does he present himself as an exception to the rule, as a foil to the judicious subject of risk who is "responsible, knowledgeable and rational" (O'Malley 1996: 202)? Risk implies a modern conception of agency that responds to and self-limits according to calculable uncertainties. What is Fr Chen doing by performing a kind of naïve irresponsibility and ignorance about his own travel documents? Later in the interview, he tells me that he neglected to do his visa paperwork in a timely manner, unlike the ordinary visa applicant who no doubt would have acted promptly. Instead, he let his invitation letter sit for several months. Passage to America was not, the message is clear, an objective he had plotted. If it were, he would not have taken such chances. He would have immediately submitted his paperwork and meticulously reviewed his documents. But in being called to take these very chances, there is, ironically, none left for him to take.

Fr Chen invokes the presence of risk through the voices of social superiors: customs officials, parish administrators, upper-level airport security, and police (1.5, 1.9, 1.11, 1.15, 1.17, 1.19). These are the characters that create the gap necessary for potential peril. They articulate Fr Chen's place in the bureaucratic organisation of human transit, expressing surprise ("*ai* how could [you], without a visa [how] could you get back?" [1.5]), asking for his visa (1.9), informing him that he is now illegally entering (1.9, 1.11), and finally, making explicit the exceptional favour they grant him (1.15). Instead, state agents – those Fr Chen might classify as soldiers, not scholars – are the ones converted.¹⁰ Airport security does not merely bend the rules; they break the law for Fr Chen and confess to him about it. He passes through unchanged, and even does the very thing he is expressly instructed to not do: "you better not ever dare to say it like this" (1.15). It is the airport security apparatus that is thus compromised, its iron sieve ruptured, and changed. The arbiter of legality has become, in Fr Chen's story, the illegal actor.

Confessional narratives often serve as vehicles of conversion. For example, in her interview with Melvin Campbell, a protégé of fundamentalist pastor Jerry Falwell, Susan Harding finds that there is no neutral space in the world of her interlocutors: she is either lost or saved. Campbell slips into the register of witnessing, narrativising his conversion, and co-opting her as a lost listener (Harding 2001: 33-47). Similarly, Fr Chen launched into a tale of conversion, not (in my view) to convert *me*, but nevertheless to transform his divinely enabled passage into a vehicle of salvation for his listeners, both the customs officials and the interviewer. He goes as far as to voice the request of the customs officials: "OK, Father, they said, we'll give you special permission this time, but you better not ever dare to say it like this" (1.15). Confronted with the scholar's reason, simple as it is, the soldier is vulnerable. Fr Chen unabashedly "say[s] it like this" while my audio recorder was turned on. Before the interview began, I had handed him a two-page Institutional Review Board handout describing the protections in place for interviewees. Many interviewees had instructed me to keep some information private, and I expected Fr Chen to do the same. At the end of the interview, however, he folded up the two pieces of paper and handed them back to me. He said he didn't need them.

10. Fr Chen's narrative echoes the biblical account of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:25-34). After an earthquake breaks the prisoners' fetters, Paul and Silas dissuade the jailer from suicide. The jailer then converts on the spot.

Moving across vocational economies

Fr Chen bases his vocational trajectory on a performance of transparency: he neither hides anything, nor has anything to hide. His effort, labour, and even his will, are erased. As he goes on to imply, one can have the work ethic, the ascetic appetite for profit never to be enjoyed, all documents and credentials in order, and still be turned away (“All they need is to doubt you, [and] they can have you leave” [1.19]). Without any of the above, the economically non-productive ascetic is granted entry and upward mobility. This turn of events is “of a miraculous nature” (1.19) because it makes light of all human effort and will: without trying, wanting, or scheming, Fr Chen succeeded at coming to North America. And in triumphant retort, perhaps, to the unflattering comparison with the better known and more widely credited need of underground Catholics to seek refuge and religious freedom abroad, Fr Chen concludes his story as follows:

Figure 3. Excerpt (2) from an interview with Fr Chen, Sections 1.19 to 1.23

1.19	So that’s to say, formerly that one [other priest] that went to Italy, also on pilgrimage, on the way back [he] wasn’t allowed to enter. On the way back – barred. Because nowadays it’s only me – only the police have the right to let you enter, to let you, [but they] can kick you out. All they need is to doubt you, [and] they can have you leave. So you see, the things that happened to me personally are all matters of a miraculous nature. () – for my part I didn’t want to leave, but it turned out that [I] left. And didn’t want to come, [and yet] came. Ah. And then when I came back I didn’t have a visa and still got in. Ha, ha, ha, ha! ((slowly)) There are even some people at the airport... with green cards – [who] get kicked out.
1.20	<i>Ai</i> with green cards-
1.21	Exactly! With green cards, [and] kicked out! Confiscated on the spot, sent back. (pause: 3 seconds) Huh!
1.22	Yeah your, this – I’ve never before heard =
1.23	= Exactly, ha! Ha! So, God arranged it. So I put everything in God’s hands, [thus] I do not fear.

The addition of the barred priest compensates for the one critical detail that has made Fr Chen’s journey possible: that he is a Patriotic priest. Fr Chen’s brisk candidness (“I just said, I’m a priest, I went on pilgrimage” [1.15]) is made possible by his official, Patriotic status. That is to say, every underground priest would have had to scheme: he would have had to “hide” his priestly occupation on his Chinese passport and visa application. Fr Chen’s former associate Fr Lu said that he never had to lie about being a priest in China, “unlike what you Americans like to think.” He always accurately filled out all forms for his passport and visa, confidently wrote “priest” in the “current occupation” box, and – lo and behold – got all his documents and left China without a hitch. When I visited him in 2015 in Los Angeles, he stressed that “Chinese today aren’t like before, the ones that came to America to do manual labour (*zuo kugong* 做工). They dress well, their clothes have quality.” PCA

priests like Fr Lu, Fr Chen, and Fr Guo struggle to convey both an ambivalent sense of pride in their home country’s economic rise as well as firmness in the legitimacy of their priesthood.

In order to curry favour with their new American and diasporic Chinese associates, however, PCA priests must also position themselves as sympathetically aligned with the underground church. Because many of them are neither connected to nor trusted by underground Catholics, this alignment is typically achieved by professing allegiance to Rome. For a PCA priest, the calling to live overseas entails performing solidarity with the underground church without completely disavowing the official church through which he has been ordained, and through which his overseas calling was realised. Highly sensitive to this impossible dilemma of alignment, priests such as Fr Chen and Fr Lu are the first to problematise the construct of boundaries: “We don’t say ‘official church,’” said Fr Lu back in 2014, “we say ‘open church’ (*gongkai jiaohui* 公開教會) because anyone can come. It’s one church with two sides.” Even so, both Fr Lu and Fr Chen claim that they had privately arranged to be ordained by a bishop who was loyal to Rome and not a member of the PCA – in other words, an underground bishop outside the archdiocese of Hangzhou. By doing so, they fell out of favour with the Hangzhou bishop who was set to ordain them. They say that this is why they are on bad terms with Midtown – and not because, as the Midtowners pointed out, the archdiocese incurred financial loss when they left. This betrayal of Midtown’s investment is then justified and erased by the ethical contrast between the PCA and the Vatican or, as Fr Chen puts it, the incommensurability of the logics of the scholar and the soldier.

For PCA priests such as Fr Chen, then, the boundary between official and underground churches, and between Beijing and the Vatican, is flexible and mobile. While one can gain moral capital (and make a case for permanent residency in the United States) by positioning oneself as a dissident, doing so may also invite legal trouble. Diocesan priests such as Fr Chen and Fr Lu are accountable to their bishop and diocese. Until incardinated or formally transferred into another diocese, a step that cannot proceed without their original diocese’s approval, they remain precariously tied to their original diocese. On the one hand, the way forward is to become a dissident. On the other hand, the way forward is to counter-protest, to openly throw oneself at the mercy of bureaucratic legality, profess the power of transparency, and work through its channels. One’s affiliation – PCA or underground – is an important consideration in how one attempts to achieve confessional mobility.

Conclusion

The vocation makes upward social mobility attainable for rural men by providing them the opportunity to relocate from a village to a metropolis. Fr Chen has retooled his vocation into a vehicle of social, educational, and physical mobility. His trajectory is not just an ambitious example of upward mobility. It is also confessional: the strategic deployment of Catholic affiliation drives it forward. The Catholic Church’s international authority is leveraged against the policing of state borders to facilitate transnational passage. The

apparent contradiction of discerning one's religious calling while freely choosing one's vocation (and location) is answered by the Catholic view that human freedom is most perfectly expressed in freely willing to follow God's will (Hahnenberg 2010: 60). That a man's calling to the priesthood should coincide with his own will to become a priest, and to go wherever he is called, is taken for granted as the proper end of religious discernment. In other words, he does not scheme; he *listens*. "We Chinese have got to follow the law [and] immigrate in a more legitimate way," Fr Chen had said to the woman before me on the November morning of our interview. Using whatever scheme he may have suspected of her as a foil, he speaks from the righteous, transparency-valourising point of view afforded by his vocation.

Transnational mobility is largely an elite, urban privilege. This paper has shown that it can also be achieved via the vocational economy of the PCA. This finding sheds light on how the politics of religion shapes transnational mobility in contemporary China. Through the priesthood, a legal and partially subsidised route to the United States becomes available to an underprivileged

class of Chinese men who otherwise might have remained in the countryside or joined the population of migrant labourers. For these men, the PCA opens the legal and financial possibility of migration. The strategic leveraging of Sino-Vatican politics, meanwhile, opens the possibility of a future overseas. On the surface, Fr Chen's narrative may appear to be a spiritual justification to leave China and stay in the United States. On a deeper level, it reveals that his critical conviction of the legitimacy of his priesthood comes from the sinicized Catholicism in which he was raised and trained, and that this conviction was made possible by the PCA-mediated alignment of his legal and spiritual identity.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Susan Gal, Julie Chu, Angie Heo, Chen-yang Kao, and the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this article. Fieldwork was funded by Fulbright IIE and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Manuscript received on 8 October 2022. Accepted on 13 May 2023.

References

- ADEY, Peter. 2008. "Mobilities and Modulations: The Airport as a Difference Machine." In Mark B. SALTER (ed.), *Politics at the Airport*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 145-60.
- BROWN, Bernardo E. 2020. "Vocation for Travel: Catholic Priestly Training in Sri Lanka." *Religion* 50(4): 636-52.
- CAO, Nanlai. 2011. *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- CAMPESE, Gioacchino. 2012. "The Irruption of Migrants: Theology of Migration in the 21st Century." *Theological Studies* 73(1): 3-32.
- CANNELL, Fenella. 2005. "The Christianity of Anthropology." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 11(2): 335-56.
- CHAU, Adam Yuet. 2019. *Religion in China: Ties that Bind*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- CHOW, Rey. 2002. *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- CORENS, Liesbeth. 2019. *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- CÔTÉ-BOUCHER, Karine. 2015. "The Paradox of Discretion: Customs and the Changing Occupational Identity of Canadian Border Officers." *The British Journal of Criminology* 56(1): 49-67.
- CRUZ, Gemma Tulud. 2011. "Toward an Ethic of Risk: Catholic Social Teaching and Immigration Reform." *Studies in Christian Ethics* 24(3): 294-310.
- ENGELKE, Matthew, and Matt TOMLINSON. 2006. *The Limits of Meaning: Case Studies in the Anthropology of Christianity*. New York: Berghahn.
- GREENHALGH, Susan. 1993. "The Peasantization of the One-Child Policy in Shaanxi." In Deborah DAVIS, and Stevan HARRELL (eds.), *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 219-51.
- GUEST, Ken. 2003. *God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York's Evolving Immigrant Community*. New York: New York University Press.
- HAHNENBERG, Edward P. 2010. *Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- HANDMAN, Courtney. 2014. *Critical Christianity Translation and Denominational Conflict in Papua New Guinea*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- HARDING, Susan Friend. 2001. *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- HARKNESS, Nicholas. 2013. *Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- HARRISON, Henrietta. 2011. "Global Modernity, Local Community, and Spiritual Power in the Shanxi Catholic Church." In Adam Yuet CHAU (ed.), *Religion in Contemporary China: Revitalization and Innovation*. London: Routledge. 203-22.
- . 2013. *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- JACKA, Tamara. 2009. "Cultivating Citizens: *Suzhi* [Quality] Discourse in the PRC." *Positions* 17(3): 523-35.
- KEANE, Webb. 2007. *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- KECK, Margaret E., and Kathryn SIKKINK. 1999. "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics." *International Social Science Journal* 51(159): 89-101.
- LESTER, Rebecca J. 2005. *Jesus in Our Wombs: Embodying Modernity in a Mexican Convent*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LIAN, Xi. 2010. *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- LOZADA, Eriberto P. 2001. *God Aboveground: Catholic Church, Postsocialist State, and Transnational Processes in a Chinese Village*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- LU, Jihong 陸紀鴻, SHEN Baozhi 沈保智, WU Jianlin 吳建林, GAO Chaopeng 高超朋, ZHU Chang 朱昌, and QU Meizhen 瞿美珍. 2015. "天主教'本土化'與愛國主義精神: 對話上海天主教會團體負責人" (*Tianzhujiao "bentuhua" yu aiguo zhuyi jingshen: Duihua Shanghai tianzhujiaohui tuanti fuzeren*, Catholic "nativisation" and patriotic consciousness: A dialogue with the organisers of Catholic institutions in Shanghai). *Zhongguo tianzhujiao* (中國天主教) 1: 34-41.
- MADSEN, Richard. 1998. *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2003. "Catholic Revival During the Reform Era." *The China Quarterly* 173: 468-87.
- . 2019. "The Chinese Catholic Church: Between Rome and Beijing and Sinicization from Above and Below." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 6(1): 5-23.
- MASLÁKOVÁ, Magdaléna, and Anežka SATOROVÁ. 2019. "The Catholic Church in Contemporary China: How Does the New Regulation on Religious Affairs Influence the Catholic Church?" *Religions* 10(7): 446. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10070446>
- O'MALLEY, Pat. 1996. "Risk and Responsibility." In Andrew BARRY, Thomas OSBORNE, and Nikolas ROSE (eds.), *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism, and the Rationality of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 189-207.
- POHL, Christine D. 2003. "Biblical Issues in Mission and Migration." *Missiology: An International Review* 31(1): 3-15.
- ROBBINS, Joel. 2014. "The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions." *Current Anthropology* 55(S10): S157-71.
- SACKS, Harvey, Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF, and Gail JEFFERSON. 1974. "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-taking for Conversation." *Language* 50(4): 696-735.
- van der VEER, Peter. 2014. *The Modern Spirit of Asia: The Spiritual and the Secular in China and India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- WEBER, Max. 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Routledge.
- YEH, Rihan. 2018. *Passing: Two Publics in a Mexican Border City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ZHAN, Shaohua. 2011. "What Determines Migrant Workers' Life Chances in Contemporary China? Hukou, Social Exclusion, and the Market." *Modern China* 37(3): 243-85.
- ZHANG, Li, and Aihwa ONG. 2008. *Privatizing China: Socialism from Afar*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.