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Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho. *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 226 S. $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-3540-1.

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While concern for the racialization of Mexican people north of the border and the articulations of U.S. imperialism in Mexico were central to the formation of a border studies intellectual agenda, the emergence of critical attention to indigenous, African, and Asian subjectivities signals the strength of this subfield and its continued relevance to numerous other areas of inquiry. The inclusion of these often forgotten historical actors maps the global contours of national border-making projects. Furthermore, these histories bring into relief the relational bonds created by interdependent racial formations. In the way that Mexican origin people have been left out of dominant narratives of U.S. history, so too have the Chinese in the Mexican historical imagination. A wide-angle approach to questions of race, gender, and identity formation in the field of border studies is dramatically improved by recent work on Asians in Mexico. This is especially the case with Julia Maria Schiavone Camacho's new book, *Chinese Mexicans*.

Chinese Mexicans is a transnational social history of mixed Chinese Mexican families. It follows the formation of these mixed families in the first two decades of the twentieth century, then tracks their displacement from Mexican territory in the 1930s, transitory existence in China, and return to Mexico under state structured repatriation programs at mid-century. While the text is centered on a seemingly simple question–what happened to the Chinese Mexican families who were forced to leave the country in the 1930s?–the author offers a complex and mediated history. Drawing from U.S., Mexican, and Chinese archives, Camacho fills in the gaps of the official record with stunning details in oral histories from the descendants of the expelled families. The multiracial and transnational dimensions of Camacho's work make it relevant to a number of areas of study that I will discuss below. The book is organized around the four main events that structured the life of these mixed families: the creation of family bonds in Mexico, expulsion, settlement in China, and return to Mexico.

The creation of Chinese Mexican families in Mexico at the beginning of the twentieth century was almost exclusively the union of Chinese men and Mexican women. Camacho adds critical insights about gender formations as crucial to understanding the conditions in which Mexican women and Chinese men established bonds of intimacy. Other recent work has considered the class segmentation of the Chinese diaspora in Mexico to explain exogamy, which, counterfactually, argued that Chinese men who did not marry Mexican women simply did not have the wealth to support a spouse. Instead, in this study, we learn that norms of Chinese masculinity and concubine traditions encouraged Chinese men to seek intimacy abroad in which marriage was one expression. Meanwhile, Mexican women made choices to marry Chinese men in the context of intense social turmoil during the revolution, with weak legal protections and inconsistent legal recourse.

This gendered perspective illustrates how Chinese migrant desires to settle combined with the policing of Mexican women's sexuality to turn Chinese Mexican unions into a political and cultural lightning rod. Indeed, Camacho's work underscores the fact that while anti-Chinese politics targeted Chinese men, their Mexican female partners suffered a different form of devastation and alienation than their Chinese spouses. Because Mexican women's rights were subsumed under that of men's, a legal fact that persisted in the 1917 constitutional reforms, a woman's marriage to a foreigner meant the loss of her Mexican nationality and the adoption of her spouse's. This articulation of racial boundaries within Mexican nationality made Chinese Mexican families extremely vulnerable. Later chapters show how despite the disavowal of Chinese Mexican families by the national state, these families forged a Mexican nationalism that eventually brought them back to Mexico, challenging previously narrow and exclusionary norms. Because Camacho's unit of analysis is the racially mixed heterosexual family, her discussion of law and national

ideology contributes new interpretations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigrant exclusion legislation. The way that Mexican women became Chinese and thus anathema to the revolutionary ideals of *mestizaje* in Mexican nationalism is an important consideration for several fields of study, not just for Mexican history. In Asian American studies, this insight broadens the social implications of "yellow peril" discourse, and for Chicano studies, it expands the feminist critique of Chicano nationalism's appropriation of Mexican ideologies of race and patriarchy.

The second part of *Chinese Mexicans* chronicles the removal of mixed families from Sonora and Sinaloa in the 1930s. The removal of families occurred over the course of two years from 1930 to 1931, forcing families to go into hiding and flee to neighboring states (primarily Baja California and Chihuahua). Those who left Mexico by force, threat, or choice most often fell into the clutches of U.S. immigration officials, and they became "Chinese refugees from Mexico" (p. 82). This status put these families into a legal limbo, disowned by the Mexican state and rejected by U.S. immigration restrictions. Furthermore, the eventual deportation of these refugee families to China led to the rejection of Mexican women's claims to Chinese nationality, despite their legal transformation under Mexican law. While Chinese husbands returned home to a privileged position, their Mexican wives and mixed children remained outside of Chinese legal norms. This transnational dimension illustrates how Mexican women continued to suffer the results of Mexican anti-Chinese politics even after they left Mexico. The experience of combined exclusions from Mexican, U.S., and Chinese national states is comparable to Mae M. Ngai's notion of impossible subjects (*Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* [2004]). However the routes of expelled women illustrate that the construction of impossible subjects were also useful strategies for Mexico and China in the management of national space and the articulation of racial belonging.

Camacho's multisourced history of the expulsion makes an important contribution to this period. On the one hand, historians have attributed the origin of anti-Chinese ideology in Mexico to the upper stratum of Mexican society–elites, politicians, and intellectuals. On the other hand, the expulsion of mixed families in the early thirties is shown here as a grassroots phenomenon. Interestingly, oral accounts collected by Camacho emphasize the perception that the government conducted the expulsion, not the people. While this attitude might reflect an ambivalent remembrance, the archival record demonstrates that Sonorenses and Sinaloenses appropriated anti-Chinese racial discourse at the local level and defied national referendums on the constitutionality of such discrimination. This experience draws important conclusions about law, race, and the state in revolutionary Mexico. Despite the defense of the Chinese in Mexican courts, such politicians as Plutarco Elias Calles exerted influence on state and local conditions, advocating for the exercise of extralegal removal of Chinese Mexican families. Likewise, the social organization of the anti-Chinese movement in Sonora and Sinaloa illustrates the cultural force of racial nationalism and the local conditions in which state power was practiced. Camacho's work also makes an invaluable contribution to the lopsided field of border studies dominated by the study of the racialization of Mexican origin peoples in the United States. While Mexicans north of the border suffered a similar fate as Chinese Mexicans south of the border, their forced removal and repatriation to Mexico did not lead to empathy for the plight of their Chinese counterparts. In fact, Camacho uncovers the cold logic discussed openly by Mexicans that if the Americans can expel Mexicans, then Mexicans could surely expel the Chinese under the same racial pretense. The expulsions of Chinese Mexicans disrupt the tidy dualism of an imperial north and victimized south prevalent in scholarship on the U.S.-Mexico border.

In the third section, Camacho traces the formation of Chinese Mexican communities in Asia and the curious reinvention of Mexican nationalism abroad. To compound the tragedy of expulsion from Mexico, the construction of a Chinese Mexican community in China was predicated on further ruptures to the family unit. The cohort of female Mexican refugees and their mixed-race children faced a number of challenges, from not speaking the language and competing with the Chinese wives of their husbands to lacking legal recognition of the Chinese identity conferred on them by the Mexican state. Camacho reports that by 1933 more than six hundred Mexican women and their Chinese Mexican children had settled in China either by choice or ordered deportation. Because Mexican authorities had confiscated much of the wealth and personal belongings from these families, they were unprepared to settle into life in their husband's villages. Their lack of resources and marginalization in Chinese society drew this group of Mexican women together; as they forged networks and cared for one another, they eventually found stability in the larger Catholic community of the Portuguese colony of Macau. Their rejection by Chinese legal and social norms cultivated an intense longing to return to Mexico. Camacho draws from Mexican consular correspondence to illustrate the heightened

performance of Mexican nationalism to government officials in Mexico City in hopes of relieving their distress. In this case, Mexican, U.S., and Chinese legal practices had stripped Mexican women of citizenship to be cast into a condition of statelessness. From this condition Mexican women and their mixed Chinese Mexican children made lifelong commitments to returning to Mexico, claiming a dispossessed Mexican nationality that later expanded Mexican citizenship laws.

Camacho shows through oral history and government records that Chinese Mexican performances of Mexican nationalism in China had unique characteristics. Receiving support from the Catholic Church, placing blame on the failure of the Mexican Revolution, criticizing Chinese culture and the Communist Chinese state, and claiming a local and national belonging in Mexico all worked in various combinations to make the repatriation of some Chinese Mexicans possible. The first instance in 1937 under the Lazaro Cardenas administration did not recognize Chinese husbands as eligible for repatriation (despite many having been naturalized Mexicans), further breaking up Chinese Mexican families. In this instance, performances of Mexican nationalism by Chinese Mexicans combined with the national reforms to citizenship law and efforts to gain international recognition through a purported rescue mission. While the Cardenas administration could claim responsibility for this episode of repatriation, Mexican women and their Chinese Mexican children expanded the legal restrictions on race as they regained recognition as Mexicans. Camacho's characterization of the decline of the anti-Chinese movement in the late 1930s can only be applied to perhaps Sonora and Sinaloa as Baja California underwent another episode of anti-Chinese violence at the same time as the Cardenas repatriation. Twenty years later during the Cold War, President Adolfo López Mateos would enact the second and last official repatriation program in 1960. Here anti-Communist rhetoric of Chinese Mexicans in China and domestic social reforms in Mexico came together to expand the restricted eligibility of the 1937 program. The performances of Mexican nationalism by Chinese Mexicans and their pursuit of repatriation expand our concept of diasporic citizenship to include these stateless subjects. It also provides crucial insights into the Asian and Pacific dimensions of the Mexican diaspora, often delimited by the U.S. Southwest.

The last section on resettlement in Mexico offers a sobering narrative that tempers the eloquent enunciations of Mexican nationalism by Chinese Mexicans with the persistent discrimination among Mexicans, neglect from government officials, and a dramatically altered homeland. Nevertheless, Camacho's oral histories attest to the deep embrace of Mexican identity among the survivors and descendants of Chinese Mexicans expelled during the 1930s. While Camacho wrote this book as a tale of Mexican diaspora, the racialization of Mexican women and mixed Chinese Mexican children as Asian others in the Americas suggests that their patterns of resettlement after the 1930s reflect a cultural logic of diasporic citizenship found among others in the Chinese diaspora, as discussed by Lok Siu in *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (2005). Readers interested in this line of inquiry will find a less developed discussion. In all, *Chinese Mexicans* recovers the nearly forgotten journey of mixed-race families that touches on a number of separate fields of study. Camacho certainly meets her mark since the book impressively covers the history of this marginalized population. The lucid prose and clear chronological structure will be appropriate for both general and specialized audiences.

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