

alization policies to concentrate capital in the hands of the wealthy. Corrupt union bosses and agrarian bureaucrats conspired with industrialists and agribusiness to produce stagnant wages for at least two generations of Mexican workers. Needless to say, foregoing domestic consumption led not to the growth of an efficient manufacturing sector but rather to a sclerotic economy incapable of competing for export markets, thus setting the stage for another encounter with North American business culture under NAFTA.

In light of this experience, Moreno's use of the term "social democracy" to describe the corporatist Mexican state seems inappropriate. The Institutional Revolutionary Party did not "buy" social peace through Nordic wages and welfare, as Enrique Ochoa's study of food policy clearly shows. Whatever carrot the government offered through subsidized maize was backed up repeatedly by the stick of repression – the 1952 election campaign of Miguel Henríquez Guzmán, the railroad workers' strike of 1959, the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, and the "dirty war" of the 1970s, the full brutality of which is only now coming to light.

These reservations notwithstanding, Julio Moreno has provided a thoughtful and nuanced account of middle-class business and consumer culture in Mexico during the first half of the century. *Yankee Don't Go Home!* will become an essential starting point for future studies of Mexico's encounter with globalization.

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Alfred Yee, *Shopping at Giant Foods: Chinese American Supermarkets in Northern California* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

From the 1930s through the 1970s, supermarkets owned by Chinese Americans outside of Chinatowns catering to non-Chinese clientele featuring mainstream products and services, dominated the grocery business in North California. Especially during the first three decades when these businesses required little technical knowledge and initial capital, Chinese-American owners edged out other competitors with cheaper prices by employing family members, relatives, and sponsoring recent immigrants from their own villages in China who, as a result of personal ties and lack of better employment alternatives, worked long hours for low wages. The secret to success was the system of "paternalism" from the "old world," "combined with ethnic solidarity and good timing" (132-3). Ironically, beginning in the mid-1950s, these supermarkets' success contained seeds of their undoing. The pool of cheap labour gradually disappeared as labour unions monitored the stores' practices and demanded that employees

be paid for all worked hours and as increasingly affluent employees moved out of employee dormitories into their own homes and sought better opportunities. Furthermore, the consensus-based partnership structures led by hardworking but often untrained shareholders that had worked so well during lucrative times steadily collapsed under the demands of increased capitalization and operation cost, and competition from national chains. By the 1970s, most stores closed as they could no longer compete against increasingly large and efficient national chains and as the aging owners retired while their children, armed with the advantages of their affluent upbringing, moved into other professions in mainstream America. Today, only a couple stores are in operation.

Yee's accessible study provides rare insights into the business practices and relationships of Chinese-American enterprises, and their historical legacy. As someone who spent fifteen years in the industry, his passion about the subject, first-hand knowledge, and personal contacts made him uniquely qualified to write this study. He points out that these largely suburban supermarkets, by promoting regular interactions between Chinese owners and non-Chinese clients and suppliers, gradually encouraged the social and economic integration of Chinese Americans into the United States. At the same time, he readily points out systemic barriers confronted by past owners. By using extensive oral interviews, he is able to reconstruct the lost histories of these enterprises. The last three analytical chapters in particular made good use of these interviews through their well-placed direct quotes, which intimately captured the past.

Yee's study, however, has certain limitations. As he admits, due to the absence or lack of access to store and employee records, he relies heavily on interviews with employers, and some employees, and published US census records, trade periodicals, and scholarly studies published prior to 1997. While he uses his sources well, he does not examine labour union and government records, interviews with past customers, or local Chinese-language newspapers. The last could have shown whether and how these supermarkets recruited other Chinese Americans and marketed themselves to the Chinese-speaking population. While the voices of men, as owners, employees, and suppliers, come through clearly, the experiences of women, as wives, sisters, daughters, and employees who undoubtedly participated in these family enterprises are absent. Furthermore, the concepts of "old world business practices" and "paternalism" remain vague, undefined, and rooted in the perception of China as timeless, homogeneous, and stagnant, a view which ignores its rapid transformation during the twentieth century, rich diversity, and regional complexity.

The two concluding chapters tantalizingly hint that the business practices common to these supermarkets were both uniquely "Chinese" and frequently used by other immigrant groups in the United States by comparing them, respectively, to those owned by "Chinese" in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the

Philippines, and the “Stop-N-Shop,” a successful chain operated by “an immigrant from the Middle East” in Sacramento. Although Yee’s approach raises questions such as what makes an English-speaking, third-generation, North American-born person and someone who grew up in Japan-occupied Taiwan both “Chinese,” and how to categorize and compare different cultural groups, he nonetheless invites future scholars to draw much needed parallels and contrasts across ethnic and national boundaries.

Yee has written an original and accessible study on Chinese-American supermarkets, their business practices, and the intricate economic and social conditions that accompanied their rise and fall. It is worthwhile reading for anyone interested in ethnic history, Asian-American studies, and business practices and labour union organizations in the trans-Mississippi West.

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Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America’s Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

Comparative history is fairly common, but it is not always done very well. Sometimes one part of the comparison is underdeveloped, the analysis of the similarities and differences between cases is weak, or the comparison does little to explain other larger questions of historical change. *Industrial Sunset*, however, suffers from none of these deficiencies. Steven High skillfully uses a comparative approach for an enlightening look at economic decline in the Great Lakes region, on both sides of the national border, between 1969 and 1984. His book also blends various fields of history to good effect, exploring the linked economic, political, social, and even environmental aspects of deindustrialization.

High’s writing style and chapter organization make for generally easy and rewarding reading. The writing is never impenetrably technical and the concise chapters, part of a painstaking approach to peeling away the multiple layers of deindustrialization, make precise points. The interpretation is also well-supported by a variety of sources, including government records, union archival material, trade journals, and 137 oral history interviews. As often happens, High was denied access to the records of companies playing key roles in the story he tells, but he did find some that had made their way into public-access collections.

High’s main argument wrestles with why Canadian workers in Southern Ontario fared so much better than their American “Rust Belt” counterparts when industrial decline led to numerous plant closings. He contends that