

more than a ‘paper creation’” (*Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics* [Stanford University Press, 2000], p. 127).

Still, any reasonable observer of Brazil’s ethnoracial political scene must note just how much has changed in the past 10–15 years. Levels of open identification as Afro-descendant or *negro* are, as Mitchell-Walthour convincingly demonstrates, at an all-time high, and the rise of affirmative action policies certainly has led to important shifts in ethnoracial discourse the public sphere. Consequently, it may be sensible for the author to attribute many of the book’s null findings regarding race, color, and political attitudes to inadequate data and the possibility that many of the analyses may be a bit premature. Indeed, younger Brazilians do seem to be driving much of the recent shifts in ethnoracial self-identification and political behavior. Yet Mitchell-Walthour, quite rightly in my estimation, avoids the overly simplistic view that the United States and Brazil are “converging.”

Ultimately, *The Politics of Blackness* makes important contributions to our scholarly understanding of ethnoracial politics in Brazil and deserves attention across the social sciences from those interested in learning more about the interface of race, color, gender, class, and politics in Brazil and in Latin America. With its mixed-methods approach and remarkable effort in data production, it is quite likely to serve as required reading for years to come.

Embedded Courts: Judicial Decision-Making in China. By Kwai Hang Ng and Xin He. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. ix+251. \$100.00 (cloth); \$52.99 (paper).

Xin Tong
Peking University

Kwai Hang Ng and Xin He’s *Embedded Courts: Judicial Decision-Making in China* is about one particular aspect of the Chinese legal system—courts—but its analyses of the way courts work are immensely valuable for understanding other parts of the Chinese legal system and society as well. Chinese courts are somehow mysterious and hard to understand because it is difficult to get access, but the authors have been able to get a great deal of important information with a lot of effort. They combine detailed empirical observation with sophisticated theoretical insight and present it all in an engaging style that is utterly free of pretentious jargon. In the book, the authors explain how Chinese judges rule and reveal the fact that the law is not the only script Chinese judges follow but political, administrative, social, and economic factors influence judicial operations altogether, which cannot be easily understood through the standard lens of judicial independence and separation of powers. The courts are structured to act in ways that satisfy various bureaucratic imperatives, of which getting the law right is one but far from the only or most important one. The authors offer us a pen-

etrating discussion of judicial operation that helps understand law practice in contemporary Chinese society.

Based on extensive fieldwork and in-depth interviews, the authors distinguished two types of Chinese courts—the work units and the firms. Each kind of courts has each behavioral pattern and carries distinct action plan while dealing with everyday business, regulating the flow of adjudicative activities, defining modal decisions, and dealing with problem cases. Further, there are four types of embeddedness in two types of Chinese courts that are interconnected. They are mutually reinforcing but also occasionally constraining of one another. Administrative embeddedness captures the central-local duality. The local network of governance and the administrative agenda and priorities guide the everyday action of the courts through the vertical-hierarchical structure. Political embeddedness refers to the duality in the purported function of the courts. On the one hand, the court is a legal institution that is supposed to carry out the law. But on the other hand, it is also a political institution that is meant to maintain social stability. Social embeddedness implies the duality of official and personal interests. It is the result of the mingling of competing commitments originating from other social roles over the impersonality and impartiality required of a judge. Obligations from the outside compete with their professional duties as judges. Economic embeddedness indicates the de facto duality between the court as a state bureaucracy that is fiscally dominated by local governments and a legal institution that is self-supported. Financial independence is consequential in shaping the working style of courts as well as the way everyday routine decisions are made in a court.

Firms and work units share the same concern about the political stability but differ in their degree of risk aversion. Firms are more inclined to take advantage of the law. They only enter the nonlaw mode of “firefighting” if a case creates strong feedback from external parties including litigants, mass media, and local government. By contrast, work units are more “law shy” and more prepared to resort to nonlaw means of resolving conflicts. Social embeddedness results from a lack of boundaries between the roles judges play. The diffused power of *guanxi* is reflected in some judges’ willingness to utilize their public power as private assets for favor exchanges. This willingness can be found in both firms and work units. Administrative embeddedness and economic embeddedness countervail each other. They represent the *pull* and *push* forces that determine the degree of vertical hierarchy adopted by a court. Different environments of judging are the essential factor that alters the institutional form of the court. Cities, with more diverse and more fragmented populations of urban dwellers, allow courts to favor adjudication over other means of dispute resolution. It is under such an environment that firm-type courts are given the space adjudication over time-consuming options such as negotiations, mediation, and reconciliation. Looking to the future, the authors think that strong local variations between courts of the firm and the work unit variants will continue to be among the most distinctive features of this purportedly simple-structured system in China.

This book is beneficial to anyone interested in the Chinese legal system and society. Its description is vivid, exhaustive, and reliable, which makes it easy for readers at all levels. The structure of the book is well organized, and the content is fruitful. However, it is worth noting that, in terms of the concept of embeddedness, the authors think it means that we emphasize both the organizational dynamics and the political economy of judicial decision making. But in fact, the determinate factor in China is the political factor, or the so-called leadership of the Communist Party of China, which means the influence of embeddedness is differential and hierarchical. Maintaining social stability is overwhelmingly significant in China, so all levels of courts have to serve that political interest first. In addition, as a very special aspect of Chinese culture, *guanxi* is ubiquitous—it exists everywhere and to a large extent makes an impact on the courts for both firms and work units. One thing the authors might neglect is that, in Chinese high-level governance, law has always been treated as a tool for maintaining stability and governance, but the social order at the grassroots level is always associated with the traditional “emotion, reason, and law” (*qing, li, fa*), which is significantly different from a modern legal society based on rationality, rights consciousness, and individualism. And when going back to the dualistic types of Chinese courts that the authors distinguish, one more interesting question is what is in the middle of that continuum of courts between firms and work units? In this sense, the major contribution the authors have made is revealing the remarkable work frontline judges have done as they bridge the gap between a rules-based application of law and an instrumentalist view that prioritizes the maintenance of stability.

Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. By Safiya Umoja Noble. New York: New York University Press, 2018. Pp. xv+227. \$28.00 (paper).

Maryann Erigha
University of Georgia

The use of the internet and search engines in particular is almost ubiquitous in daily life, yet most people hardly contemplate the politics that govern the architecture and design of algorithms, nor do most raise issue with the content that appears in search results, why it appears, and what implications it has for social interaction. Safiya Umoja Noble, in *Algorithms of Oppression*, unmask the veil that obscures the human decision-making processes behind algorithmic-driven software, artificial intelligence technologies, and computer-generated automation (chap. 1). Her fascinating intersectional analysis of racial, ethnic, and gender identity in Google Search (drawing upon a snapshot of search results between 2009 and 2015) reveals how online search rankings structure knowledge, reflect racialized cultural, social, po-