Decolonizing Historiography of China

How Chinese dynasties periodization works with the tribute system and sinicization to erase diversity and euphemize colonialism

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Standard narratives present "China" as a continuous entity since ancient times, attaining its current territorial shape through cultural osmosis rather than military force, and presiding over a peaceful Sinocentric system maintained through Confucian deference. Yet, as readers of Chinese history know: wars and conquest have been no less common in China than anywhere else; state backed migrations by Chinese into "frontiers" have displaced indigenous peoples in ways reminiscent of European settler colonialism, and the legacy of this expansion remains problematic decades after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in the territory of the former Qing empire.

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