While the preceding chapters explore the state's role in urban neighbourhood management, Chapter five scrutinizes the perceptions and behaviours of non-state actors. Drawing on Michel Foucault's construct of governmentality, Tang posits that state-sponsored discourse, such as "self-governance," outlines the expected political conduct of citizens and non-state groups. She stresses that non-state actors are not passive recipients of orders from, or victims manipulated by, the party-state; rather, they exhibit a certain degree of autonomous participation, adopting strategies to gain collective benefits by working with state actors. In other words, non-state actors accept the leadership of the party-state while seeking greater autonomy and flexibility in urban neighbourhoods.

In the final chapter, Tang summarizes the five aforementioned key components constituting her hybrid authoritarianism thesis. She concludes that state and non-state actors have become interdependent and avers that they collaborate to shape local state–society relations in China, as government responsiveness facilitates mass mobilization and vice versa. This reciprocal relationship between the state and the masses highlights a departure from the traditional paternalistic governance model that previously dominated the field of Chinese local politics. While existing studies offered a similar argument, albeit one finding that state paternalism still prevailed over social autonomy, Tang, building on her extensive ethnographic work, offers compelling evidence to show that urban neighbourhood governance in China increasingly relies on social participation.

Tang's empirical data, collected over the past fifteen years from different types of urban neighbourhoods and across different regions, is one of this book's greatest strengths. After conducting more than two hundred interviews with local officials, service providers and ordinary residents, Tang amassed a unique and balanced set of on-the-ground information that enabled her to offer a comprehensive and nuanced account of urban neighbourhood governance in China.

For the reasons above, *Governing Neighborhoods in Urban China* will be essential reading for both undergraduate and graduate students of contemporary Chinese society and politics. Additionally, social scientists seeking overarching theories will find the key concept and underlying logic of local governance in this book applicable to other authoritarian contexts. Comparativists will benefit from assessing the differences between "hybrid authoritarianism" and extant varieties of "authoritarianism with adjectives." Sociologists might be interested in the impact of social stratification on participatory autonomy, while China scholars could further investigate how the pluralization of neighbourhood governance affects political trust and regime legitimacy. In essence, Tang's book lays the groundwork for future research and broader debates on the various mechanisms through which authoritarian regimes exert control over society at the local level.

Reinventing the Chinese City

Richard Hu. New York: Columbia University Press, 2023. 306 pp. $32.00; £28.00 (pbk). ISBN 9780231211017

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Richard Hu's new book adopts an eye-catching title, *Reinventing the Chinese City*, which arouses curiosity as to what is the old Chinese city and why and how it is being reinvented. By investigating

"the contemporary transformation of the Chinese city – its drivers, rationale, patterns, and outcomes" (p. 14), the author provides a comprehensive interpretation of the latest development of the Chinese city. Hu focuses on the period since 2012, when Xi Jinping became the national leader. The beginning of this period was a significant turning point in China's economic development path, from a sustained high rate of GDP growth to a moderate rate (below 7 per cent a year) known as the "new normal." The national policy direction was adjusted accordingly, from an emphasis on quantity expansion to a call for high-quality development. The "new normal" and the new policy direction affect urban development significantly and unsurprisingly, as the major cities are the engine of the national economy, and most of China's population live in urban areas.

The book is well written and highly readable. The first chapter sets the stage for the examination of whether the political "new era" under Xi's leadership influences urban development to the extent that it could be called a "new urban era." In the next five chapters, the author presents five city case studies – each with a different theme – that include the green revolution (Beijing), the smart city movement (Hangzhou), the great innovation leap forward (Hefei), the Xiong'an experiment and the reorienting of Hong Kong. These cases are followed by an analysis of China's urban development toward 2035 and beyond. In the final chapter, the author provides a more scholarly discussion on the nature of the Chinese city.

The author was an urban planning practitioner in Beijing many years ago, before moving to Australia, and he is familiar with China's urban planning and implementation. To write the book, he made several field trips to the case cities. The stories are told vividly, often mixed with his own personal experiences. The materials are rich and are organized skilfully by theme and along the dimension of time, which gives the audience an overall picture of the latest urban development in China and an understanding of many concepts and programmes arising from the process, such as new-type urbanization, e-urbanization, "city cluster," "metropolitan circle," territorial spatial planning, and "lucid water and lush mountains," in addition to green city, smart city and innovation city.

Analytically, the author attempts to interpret China's urban development in a political context. He emphasizes the politics so heavily that one may come away with an impression that the national leadership plays the most significant role in guiding urban development. If this is indeed the message that the author attempts to convey, it may be questioned if much of the urban transformation in the "new urban era" would happen under the Communist Party rule regardless of who was at the top of the leadership. In fact, the groundwork that paved the way for the new urban transformation was carried out before the "new era." For example, urban development issues were rigorously examined, and policy recommendations made, in *Urban China: Toward Efficient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Urbanization*, a 2014 book published jointly by the World Bank and the Development Research Center of the State Council.

The author exhibits a strong personal interest in the evolution of Chinese politics and how it directly affects urban development. But the political context is overly emphasized, even to the point that the buzzwords of the Maoist era – "revolution," "movement" and "great leap forward" – are borrowed to describe the green city, smart city and innovation city, respectively. Although these words are used to draw attention from the audience, they have the unintended effect of reminding older generation Chinese of the tragic years. Nonetheless, the author is generally candid, critical and well balanced in presenting both the bright side and the dark side of urban development in China.

Reaching the end of the book, one may wonder what the Chinese city is really about, and if China is reinventing its city as suggested by the title. Hu's answers to these two questions are vague and inadequate. China's urbanization over the last seven decades is unique in the sense that it has been heavily guided by central government policy. Within the authoritarian regime, cities have little autonomy, and urban development at the local level serves not only local interests but also national objectives. A city developed under such a political system is best called "the

Chinese city," and is distinct from other cities around the world. The author seems to miss this important nature of the Chinese city. Without clearly defining "the Chinese city," the book's title does not represent the central message within. From the book's contents, one would conclude that the latest urban development is more a logical transformation along the old path than a reinvention of something old.

The book contains rich and up-to-date information about the latest urban development in China. It is highly accessible not only to urban scholars and university students, but also to laymen outside China who wish to know what is going on in China's recent urban development. One may agree or disagree with the author's interpretations, nevertheless, the book provides a valuable basis for further discussion and interpretation.

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in China: A Critical Approach

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Ever since Chinese President Xi Jinping came into office in 2012, he has stressed the value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage more than any of his predecessors. During various conferences and meetings, Xi has articulated that cultural heritage is essential to the spirit of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*) and should be integrated into the political project of rejuvenating Chinese culture. Meanwhile, heritage preservation has become a big business in Chinese cities. The incentives behind this business are complicated. In 2006, the State Council placed 518 intangible cultural heritage (ICH) items on the first round of lists. In its notification, the State Council proclaimed that "the preservation and use of ICH is significant to promoting China's cultural tradition, enhancing ethnic unity and national unification, consolidating national confidence and integrity, and prompting the construction of socialist spiritual civilization" (https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2006/content_334718.htm). By every measure, the social, economic and political value of ICH cannot be underestimated in China.

Junjie Su's new book, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in China: A Critical Approach*, offers a detailed analysis of how ICH is recognized and produced in the context of tourism development in China. The case study is Lijiang, a highly popular tourist destination known for Naxi ethnic culture and located in Yunnan province. The book examines various forms of ICH, and considers the perspectives of government officials, scholarly experts, and local practitioners and community members. This analysis of multiple perspectives is a key contribution to understanding the complicated and even conflicting meanings of ICH. Tensions between the protection of heritage and the commodification of tourism provide another key agenda in the book. Based on the author's doctoral dissertation, the analysis captures rich texture from his Lijiang fieldwork in the early 2010s and relies on participant observation and in-depth interviews.