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<vrh>Introduction</vrh>

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<rst>State Policies, Castes, and Agency</rst>

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Two new castes have emerged in China in the wake of the nation's urbaneconomic reforms, one super-wealthy and the other abjectly indigent. As Martin Whyte expressed the situation, "The rising incomes of the nouveaux riches have resulted in very conspicuous consumption . . . The gaps between the rich and the poor are not only much larger today but strikingly more We can't change this because it's a direct quotation visible."¹ Meanwhile, according to two researchers who have written on the minimum livelihood guarantee (*zuidishenghuabaozhang*, *dibao* for short), the government's program for the urban-registered destitute, "The *dibao* merely prevents recipients from starving."²

Much has been made in both the academic literature and in the press—whether foreign or in China—of the rise in incomes in the country, across the board, over almost forty years of spectacular economic growth, along with an accompanying social transformation. The media has also showered attention on an emerging and expanding middle class. But, counterintuitively, in this era of rapid economic rise, it is not just the nouveaux riches, among whom billionaires multiply monthly,³ or the members of the mushrooming middle class who now populate the municipalities. The poverty-stricken, if often hidden around the edges of the cities, are also present.⁴

These several collectivities—wealthy, middle class, and indigent—it could be argued, have each become inbred, nearly as if as members of respective they were members of

represented distinct lineages. In the earlier phases of the reform process, there was a window for significant upward social mobility, and the middle class does continue to expand. But the fact still stands that both the very poor and the ultra-prosperous are increasingly members of caste-like formations, closed social structures from which exit is prohibitive for the former, and entry into the latter of which are you really sure about this? Since I put “from which” just above, it would sound better, I think, to retain the parallel construction is unlikely for those outside it, as this volume will detail.⁵

Along with these bounded structures a hierarchy of *agency* has emerged in Chinese cities. Here I imagine a pyramid of progressively wealthier people who, compared to those less and less endowed with resources as that pyramid widens below, have increasingly more power over their lives as their riches expand (as one moves up the structure). In the terminology of Anthony Giddens, “agency” refers to “be[ing] able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers.”⁶ I use this notion of variable ranges in agency (or of differential degrees of command over one’s life) to represent the great discrepancies in room for choice and maneuver among those in these two castes in today’s Chinese cities, respectively.

How can this bifurcation (and this remarkable coproduction of flashing flashy affluence and dire penury) be accounted for, even as China’s extraordinary productivity and profits fill the news? In this introduction, I will argue that it has been state policies and their consequences that are the culprit,⁷ even if this outcome has not necessarily been intentional on the part of state leaders. Accordingly, I review here the many ways in which a range of state strategies and decisions over four decades has contributed to this effect.

In what follows I first offer an explanation for my adoption of the concept of “caste”; then I take a look at the role of the state in forging this framework. Finally, I fit the book’s chapters into this interpretative model.

<a>Caste in Contemporary Chinese Cities

There are a multitude of definitions for the term “caste,” and scholars disagree even about its most critical features.⁸ But commentators do concur that its boundaries are fixed and set by endogamy (marriage within a given social unit), coresidence, and kinship.⁹ In India, where caste is pervasive, there are rigid barriers against mobility out of the caste of one’s birth;¹⁰ in the words of Ekta Singh, “Ascriptive rather than achieved characteristics are the basis of exclusion . . . [these characteristics] are not amenable to alteration as a consequence of individual agency.”¹¹ So, admittedly, core components of the caste system in its pure form are incompatible with the room for agency or movement that I see in the groupings featured in this book.

Other characteristics of castes would also appear to frustrate an effort to compare them to China’s urban wealthy and poor: for one, they situate their members hierarchically into *occupationally and ritually ranked* groupings, which is not the case in China. Additionally, unlike Chinese social formations, castes are primarily distinguished by religiously based notions of purity and pollution, with those at the bottom being subject to violence, social ostracism, and economic penalties, none of which typically befall China’s indigent in the cities.¹²

And yet, in a number of critical ways, what the Chinese state has wrought *does* amount to a caste system of sorts. This is so perhaps above all in the unshakeable power and wealth that mark those at the pinnacle of the social pyramid in both countries.¹³ But the analogy applies best with regard to the lowliest in the two societies. For members of the Dalit (or “untouchable”) community¹⁴ are “hidden” and “forgotten,” “shunned from society,” and face “widespread

discrimination,”¹⁵ much like the recipients of the minimum livelihood guarantee (*dibao*), those urban-registered city residents assessed as sufficiently below the poverty line to qualify for a monthly compensatory allowance. Indeed, many who are in severe need eschew applying for the grant precisely because of the shame they would feel in living on it. These humbled subjects, like Dalits, bear a social identity that matches the societal neglect and disparagement their Indian counterparts also receive.

Such social rejection (as well as approbation for the occupants of the highest rungs) is justified officially in both societies. The position of both conglomerations is legitimated in China with reference to “reform,” the country’s quest for “modernity” and its glorious future generally, of which the poor are not to be a part (as spelled out in chapter [three](#)).¹⁶ Instead, in the words of Chinese past-President Jiang Zemin, [\[I always see the P capitalized—are you sure?\]](#) it is especially those with “advanced culture” and those managing “advanced productive forces” who can make a valuable contribution to the nation. And as a laid-off worker, perhaps convinced by the state’s propaganda, is quoted as having said: “Our generation is just the sacrificial victims of reform and opening! The leaders said so.”¹⁷ In India, contrastingly, justification occurs as well, but it is Hindu religious doctrine and accompanying indoctrination that validate distinction.¹⁸

And while in India those viewed and treated as belonging at the base are forbidden to marry outside their station,¹⁹ surely in China no one capable of self-support would want his [or](#) [her](#) child to wed a *dibao* dependent. It is true that Indian “untouchables” have formally been denied proper education.²⁰ But the inferior neighborhood schools to which the impoverished children in urban China are assigned by the state and the costs of school fees, tutors, trips, uniforms, computer use, and senior high school may not forbid, but surely undercut, opportunity for learning by the poor.

Another issue is employment: in both countries the job market is fixed. In India this occurs by custom and sanction; in China exclusion happens on the basis of education, skill, ageism, social background, and money. Dalits are explicitly forbidden from taking positions that could entail any physical contact with their social betters, and also are explicitly appointed to such menial posts as cleaning toilets and collecting garbage (jobs which are, interestingly, also allocated to *dibaohu*). And for those at the bottom in both countries there is great difficulty acquiring a steady income and also much involuntary unemployment. In both places, personal connections make much difference, whether for those of means who possess them or for those with none.²¹ How, exactly, has this sort of structure come about in China in recent decades?

<a>The State's Construction of Social Disparity

Conventionally commentators have pointed to *markets* and market reforms as the origin of change. The truth, though, is that the program that set the process of social polarization into gear was in fact the leadership's move to modernize the economy in late 1978. This politicians aimed to do so no—this they aimed to do by...the word "so" does not fit here by providing firms and farmers with incentives to produce more, and by gradually diminishing state planning (which, over time, did lead to the emergence of markets). Thus markets can be conceived as a proximate (but not a fundamental) root of the nation's subsequent developmental social trajectory.

It was this initial project of top politicians to revamp the economy so it squarely faced modernization (and not a choice for markets per se) that led on to an unfolding of political and social reversals. And these events, ultimately, spawned this split-at-the-extremities in what was once a relatively equal society. To illustrate: China's billionaires as of 2015 held \$1.4 trillion in known net worth,²² close to the gross domestic product of all of Australia.²³ At the same time, according to one account, the number of individuals with a net worth over 10 million yuan has

been increasing yearly. But as of the mid-2010s the number of such individuals amounted to under 0.1 percent of the total population.²⁴ At the other end, just in the cities alone, [something near](#)roughly twenty million residents who are legally urbanites are known officially to live below their cities' poverty lines; uncounted others exist as well.

This volume presents five cases that represent these two urban Chinese castes. It begins with a chapter that sets up the sociological background in which these caste-like formations exist and an ethnographic chapter that contrasts the lifestyles of the social segments at each end of China's urban polarization. Here I preface these analyses and portraits by pointing to specific state policies that produced this extreme divergence in incomes. I then review a number of recent studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to account for my use of the concept of "caste." Finally, I summarize the ways [in which the book's chapters](#)—each [chapter](#) presents its picture of polarization. As I do so, I will use the studies to defend my image of a hierarchy of "agency."

In the early 1980s, when chief strategist and top leader Deng Xiaoping took over the helm of state from Mao-appointed Hua Guofeng, he allegedly publicized an aphorism allowing—or even encouraging—"some [to] get rich first." This maxim served to glorify the pursuit of wealth for those positioned to participate in it.²⁵ In so announcing, Deng legitimized at the popular level practices that had been anathema, even criminal, for nearly three decades under Mao Zedong and his followers.

~~Besides~~ [In addition to](#) that adage, there was another origin of the plunge from the early 1980s onward into profit-seeking in the commercial and industrial sectors. This was the Communist Party Politburo members' consensual assessment that the economy was seriously stagnating, and they attributed this outcome to two sets of factors. The first of these were the longer-term rigidities that were part and parcel of the state planning system borrowed from the

Soviet Union; the obsolete machinery long used in that system contributed mightily, too. And second were the more recent assaults the economy had endured in the destruction, the battles, and the work stoppages of the just-concluded Cultural Revolution.²⁶

These problems became starkly salient as the country began, at Deng's and his colleagues' instigation, to engage with the world economy and its threatening force of competition. Though this involvement had begun, if hesitantly, in the early 1970s, it took on growing intensity as the years passed. Another crucial factor was the Communist Party's urgent need to justify its rule among a populace that had sustained a yearning for commodities for decades. As I noted many years ago:

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Politicians taking stock of the state of the national economy in early 1979 identified two separate strands of the crisis it faced. One of these was new: the recently greatly intensified "opening to the world" which China had launched in 1978 posed novel challenges, both developmental and budgetary. The other one was older: a systemic crisis that could be traced back to the installation of the Soviet-style growth model in the 1950²s, combined with troubles from the ten-year Cultural Revolution, which exaggerated features of that Soviet model . . . a backward and imbalanced industrial structure.²⁷

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As noted above, the decisions the leadership ~~took at first~~ initially made were not meant specifically to induce market practices. They were aimed instead at less abstract, totalistic goals. Firstly, they sought to shift the weight of state investment from heavy to light industry (that is, from big machinery, chemicals, metals, and the like to items of daily use) in order to meet domestic

consumers' desires and the world market's demands. The second objective was to stimulate the output in industrial firms. The political elite ~~did not understand~~ understood that by allowing enterprises to retain a small portion of their earnings, and by permitting them to take responsibility for their own profits and losses, productivity would increase.

In agriculture, too, it was not really an adoption of markets that spurred reforms. Rather, local cadres, in conjunction with daring peasants, ~~on~~ of their own volition; I believe the comma should no longer be here returned to practices authorized by the Party nearly twenty years earlier but which the leadership had then soon afterward rescinded. The critical behavior, now authorized, was to contract production quotas to teams instead of to their higher-level commune brigades (though some farmers in desperate straits stealthily contracted directly to households).²⁸ In both cases—in industry and in agriculture—the idea was to incentivize and thereby enhance production. Firms were empowered to sell surpluses above their quotas and rural market fairs were sanctioned for the first time since the early 1960s, all in the interest of improving economic achievement.

As the 1980s wore on, however, bit by bit these steps did lead to markets. A critical mechanism in this process ~~were~~ was ~~what were termed~~ “dual-track prices pricing.” This ~~institution~~ mechanism encouraged officials who managed scarce resources and goods to use market prices to sell items in short supply even as state-plan-dictated prices remained in effect for business with those without this power.²⁹ By the late 1980s, farmers, along with enterprise managers, were willy-nilly deeply involved in markets; and “collectively” (not state-owned) firms were proliferating. These developments happened more or less spontaneously, outside of specific official orders.

It was not until 1992 that central-level political elites were prepared to endorse the notion of a “socialist market economy,” thus signaling their rhetorical support for the markets that had already appeared in practice. By then, the numbers of “collective” firms operating outside the rules of the state-led economy (~~i.e. that is~~, they were free to dispense with allocating benefits to their workers and tended to set low wages, not ~~state~~-dictated by the statesetwages.) mounted,³⁰ while more and more foreign-invested companies also entered the country (many of ~~them~~ which also treated ~~ing~~-employees in accordance ance with rules of their own³¹). Old state-sectoral factories suffered perilously in the ensuing competition. And it became ever-more apparent that state planning could not keep up with markets; it also seemed that continuing to order state enterprises to dispense welfare to their staff and workers was putting them at a comparative disadvantage.

Quantitative Studies of the Impact of State Policies² Impact

In response, state ~~policy was~~ policies were eventually rewritten to let state enterprises better match up with their competitors. Welfare outlays gradually fell away as net subsidies and transfers to state-affiliated workers declined from 39 percent of a worker’s income in 1988 to only 11 percent by 1995.³² Meanwhile, the free education and medical care of the state planning days gradually disappeared for state workers. Even the advent of medical insurance did not afford much solace, as the premiums could surpass the ability of the new poor to pay.³³ Besides, beginning in the early 1980s and continuously continuing throughout the 1990s, China’s leaders edged the nation further and further into global markets, especially in preparation for acceptance and entry into the World Trade Organization. This process entailed drastically lowering tariffs, adding yet one more dimension to the problems that the inferior goods manufactured in state factories faced in domestic markets. So not only did internal competition become considerably

more severe, but there was now, for the first time, a need to attract foreign buyers and external investment.³⁴

Property rights reform got underway in the early 1990s with experiments with the shareholding system,³⁵ yet ~~one more~~ another governmental decision to stir up incentives to generate superior output. But as Wu and Huang assert, despite the rapid economic growth of these years stimulated by economic reforms, such success spawned not only great wealth but also new poverty.³⁶ Finally in the fall of 1997, the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party announced that factories must “cut their personnel [to] raise their efficiency” (*jianyuanzengxiao*), a momentous decision that set untold numbers of layoffs into motion.

Other changes in the domestic political economy spurred inequality as well. Privatization of housing assets and educational-costs-cutting reforms were two of these. Another, fundamental issue that underlay many of the other transformations was officials’ ability to play off the power, access to resources, and inclusion in networks with businesspeople they had acquired over many years.³⁷ Such partnerships sped up the emergence of the highly moneyed and the very poor, two castes whose presence in the cities had already become evident by the late 1990s. All of these changes were the product of state policies (as highlighted in chapter ~~1~~ one).

By the latter part of the 1990s, China’s acceptance into the World Trade Organization (for which it had applied more than a decade earlier) seemed soon to be on the horizon. This prospect ~~seemed~~ appeared to spell the denouement of central policymakers’ long-standing coddling of loss-making enterprises. It presaged a huge-scale prod to such plants to throw off their less-productive workers and led local officials to push these firms toward bankruptcies, shutdowns, mergers, and takeovers. These various measures ultimately supplied the fuel that

propelled a spree of blood-letting; according to at least one source, some sixty million workers who had been employed in state and collective firms were dismissed almost at one shot.³⁸

Even though inequality had been mounting in the country before this showdown,³⁹ the huge ~~erows~~number of layoffs had momentous consequences for the emergence of extremes in urban riches and destitution. On the one hand, enterprise sellouts and purchases and the privatization of housing, both at the heart of the property rights reforms, made it possible for officials and managers to gain excessive wealth through the sale of assets. At the same time, entrepreneurs collected rents; and—heavily dependent on political figures for capital, credit, favorable policies, and connections—handed over bribes on an extensive scale. Surveying the period from 2002 to 2007, economists found that asset ownership had by then become the number-one factor responsible for inequality.⁴⁰

On the other hand, many analysts concur that the massive unemployment that arose in the aftermath of the 1997 Party Congress was the most potent cause of a new form of poverty that quickly manifested.⁴¹ Even before 1997, as joblessness rose, poverty had already accelerated and deepened: in the seven years leading up to 1995, the most grinding level of poverty in the cities increased as a percentage of the urban population by over 145 percent over what it had been in 1988.⁴²

Meng Xin has shown that in the short period from 1995 to 1999, China's unemployment rate rose from 8 to 17 percent. She concluded that, by 1999, "The most important factor in income inequality" had become "economic restructuring," as those in the lowest 5 percentile in income distribution fell victim to further income reduction while those at the top enjoyed significant income gains.⁴³ Similarly, Jinjun Xue and Wei Zhong found that in 1999 the poverty

rate was 13.2 percent for families in which at least one member was jobless; versus just 2.8 percent in ~~ones-families~~ where everyone was employed.⁴⁴

Shi Li also reported a 56 percent decrease in a worker's income if the person lost his or her job compared with that individual's income before losing the job.⁴⁵ An additional aggravating factor was that, with the collapse of the low-grade manufacturing sector, a disabled person or ~~a person~~ in poor health had a 74 percent higher probability of falling into poverty than a healthy person did as of the early 2000s. And yet even those quite capable of laboring were also unable to find stable work.⁴⁶

In short, scholars concur that it was first the state's ultimatum on forced unemployment and later government-generated shifts in asset ownership (including ~~of~~ housing) that were the root causes of enormous income shifts and accompanying surges in poverty and wealth. There is also agreement that both of these phenomena, the by-products of state-structural "readjustment" and privatization, were the fruits not simply of market forces in motion; but of specific and explicit state policies. This is not to claim that the leadership willed this social cleft, only that its intentional goals and programs brought it about.

Others have written of yet more explanations for the new and growing chasm between social classes. The first of these was a decentralization of costs and responsibilities which saddled lower-level administrations with the payments ~~for of~~ welfare assistance. But despite the localities' new obligations, the "reform" did not extend to these authorities the funds necessary to meet the relevant expenses. This decision hurt the less well-off; while providing the connected with ~~yet~~ ~~even~~ more opportunities for graft.⁴⁷ Another factor was the demographic composition of the poor. That is, those who were dismissed ~~—~~, being older, less educated, and less skilled—~~as~~ a

~~result product~~ of Cultural Revolution school closures—were people who found it difficult to find new positions.⁴⁸

One additional and significant issue was the state policy offering preferences and priorities for places ~~that had with~~ regional or /geographic advantages, thus boosting, ~~which boosted~~ the fortunes of those living ~~in them there~~ while putting those residing ~~disadvantaging people~~ in areas that lacked such governmental privileges at an even further disadvantage.⁴⁹ And finally, undergirding it all was an opening to entrepreneurship, along with ~~an~~ the increasing role of resort to technology in production. These factors meant cuts in jobs for the lower-skilled while affording those who were more intelligent or more educated or otherwise in possession of greater human capital the chance to do well in business or to make good on their property.⁵⁰

Qualitative Studies on the State, the Poor, and the Wealthy

Granted, China has no formal structure that explicitly creates a caste system like that in India. Yet qualitative studies highlight how the processes of economic transition and transformation, combined with remnants of the institutions and conventions inherited from the previous, planned-era economy, have engendered polar entities that perform in practice as castes do in a number of ways. A telling statement made by a wealthy businessman contemplating emigrating to the U.S. United States from China (which requires making a business investment in the States worth at least US\$500,000 USD) [AU:FYI:changed here to match other chapters] epitomizes this observation: “People like us are all emigrating,” he remarked to explain his decision to leave his country. “If staying in China, my children will have to marry the children of my drivers and employees.”⁵¹ The man implies here that he fears if he were to remain in China and if his

business should fail, his offspring might sink into a largely endogamous social group of poor people.

Anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, cultural studies scholars, historians, political scientists, and geographers who work on China have contributed in-depth treatments of the impoverished and the wealthy and the impact of the state on these new formations; several studies of the habits and practices of the middle class are also instructive. Such ethnographies showcase the informal prohibitions in urban China that in recent decades have limited entry into the world of great wealth, or else they delineate the hopelessness of exit from the holes into which the indigent have sunk.⁵² What has resulted, their studies reveal, is an aura of entrenchment-cum-exclusiveness on one side and inescapability-cum-exclusion on the other. This presence of two sets of enclosed collectivities in the cities suggests that the concept of caste is apposite.

Social scientists have attributed this rise of what I am calling castes to one of two broad categories of events: ~~either to~~ change or ~~to~~ continuity. Pointing to change, some scholars maintain that the rich acquired their wealth chiefly as beneficiaries of state-led economic liberalization and accompanying economic growth.⁵³ The evidence here is that the most advantaged have been Communist Party (and often state) officials. These people, along with their accomplices, have been in a position to milk their proximity to power to “hoard [the] income-generating opportunities and extract [the] major rents,”⁵⁴ that their grip on power, resources, and regulations affords them. For the poor, crucial shifts in state policy, especially the end of assured employment and the withdrawal of free medicine and cheap secondary education, have shut the gate on advancement, promising an unending stasis in a base status for these people and their descendants.⁵⁵

Still another critical change that scholars highlight has to do with the state's grantings of home ownership to most urban residents, either outright or at far-below-market prices. This handout has lent-given new proprietors the ability to amass vast rents, as Luigi Tomba has shown shows in his book, *The Government Next Door*. Tomba also demonstrates the boost in status that new homeowners, especially those residing in high-class gated communities, have acquired. This is in obvious opposition-contrast to what often amount to hovels inhabited by citizens subsisting in "dilapidated working class areas."⁵⁶ Li Zhang's portrait of the new middle class in Kunming, *In Search of Paradise*, makes a similar point. She narrates there how differentially differently the members of this class are treated by officialdom and developers, in distinction from particularly how the poor—frequently forced, even violently, from their soon-to-be-demolished homes—fare in this regard.⁵⁷ Those who have made it good warrant a shot at self-governance, in the official eyes of officials, while the rest become the acted-upon.⁵⁸

But other scholars look to continuity, not change, as the cause of caste formation, despite the fact that pre-1978 China was remarkably egalitarian. Glancing backward, they argue that the rewards and the losses brought on by reform have accrued to their recipients on the basis of legacies from the state's policies and programs from the socialist era. That explanation refers to old inequality-producing institutions that have persisted across the border of economic systems. The result has been, is that persons who stood in positions of state-sponsored privilege and priority before 1978—not only in political offices but also because of various state-decreed policies—have managed to continue to stay atop the social hierarchy.

These policies include people's household registration, past employment in the stronger state-owned enterprises, and even, within cities, within cities residence within cities [I think my meaning comes across better as I had it, if I add a comma after "cities"] in the relatively more

affluent neighborhoods or favored sites under the planned economy.⁵⁹ Those on the fortunate end of the spectrum got a significant head start once structural transformation got underway, while those unfavorably situated in earlier years went on being at a disadvantage. That disadvantage was only magnified by the policies of the transition and also by these people's long-term lack of the human capital that market success calls for. In his book *Boundaries and Categories*, Wang Feng takes a somewhat different tack. He does not exclude the role of either the new market system nor of prior institutions. His main focus, however, is to illuminate how socioeconomically disparate categories of groups have arisen as a function of social processes of differentiation and realignment, processes that were set into motion by both old and changing state policies.⁶⁰

Another related sort of interpretation that explicitly links the two themes of change and continuity centers on ties between party officials and businesspeople. These bonds enable individuals who have found ways to succeed financially to do so on the strength of befriending the powerful, thereby acquiring potent political capital themselves, which, in turn, assists them mightily in acquiring their wealth. John Osburg's book, *Anxious Wealth*, explicates in great depth the workings of such "elite networks," as it portrays these connections and graphically conveys the clout they lend.⁶¹

Those not enjoying such liaisons have no way to attain entrée to the channels of upward social mobility. By the same token, a poverty-stricken interview subject, holder of a diploma from a third-rate college, was spending his post-graduation time loitering in his family's tiny one-room apartment when I spoke with him. Urged to look for a job, he was defended by his mother, who excused him by bemoaning, "We have no connections (*guanxi*), how can he find any work?"⁶²

The recitals of the sagas and the fine-grained analyses of the urban middleclass by Luigi Tomba, Li Zhang, and Deborah Davis; of the ultra-rich by [John](#) Osburg and David Goodman; of the ultra-poor—whether jobless past-workers or displaced migrants—by Jie Yang, Mun Young Cho, and Fulong Wu et al.; and of the disparate shopping habits of each of the urban classes by Amy Hanser all outline ~~the vastly discrepant ways in which~~ [vast discrepancies in how](#) the members of urban society’s respective social sections ~~each~~ [lives](#) their lives.⁶³ Through its manifold manipulations, it is the state that has fabricated this diversity of situations among those who populate the municipalities. This, again, is a disparity that has manufactured a virtual, emblematic caste system, whose upper tiers are tough to dislodge and whose base is bolted into a groove from which escape is virtually impossible. In what follows I review the chapters in this volume and use the material in them to assess the degrees of agency open to those perched at each of these two social poles. The discrepancies displayed form a pattern that constitutes a hierarchy of agency.

The Volume: A Hierarchy of Agency

In the framework outlined by Anthony Giddens, “structure” forms the fields in which each caste functions and experiences its daily pleasures or sufferings. But in Giddens’ words, “Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling.”⁶⁴ This is a judgment that, at least for some, can allow for agency, or individual choice and maneuver, within structure. But how much space does each social segment really have? ~~That is,~~ [what space is accessible](#) to “make a difference to a preexisting state of affairs or the course of events?” For, in Giddens’ perspective, “action [and, obviously, agency] depends upon the capability of the individual” to do just that.⁶⁵

My argument is that the chapters share a prominent message: ~~that is,~~ their stories display not just the caste-like containers in which rich and poor persist, ~~T~~ they also reveal the grossly dissimilar bounds within which the urban wealthy and poor do or do not have an “agency” that allows them to rearrange or transcend their roles and their behaviors.

The volume begins with two macroanalyses that provide overviews; they graphically depict the respective shapes of, and the contrasts that separate, these castes. The first of these is sociological; the other is ethnographic. In chapter 1, Wang Feng presents a sociological study of the formidable situation facing the political elite in confronting rapidly rising inequality, even if its members wished to alleviate it. He makes a strong argument that housing and education policies, along with an individual’s political power, have pushed the already advantaged into positions ~~that led to where~~ “economic inequality that began in income ~~...~~ evol[ing] into a form of more durable and consequential inequality, namely inequality in wealth.” This has occurred as the privileged have worked in firms that heavily subsidized their acquisition of property (which has inflated in value over time), through their access to resources and power that enabled further accumulation, or via their ability to afford and enter costlier, better-equipped institutions of learning. Regressive public transfers also play a role in Wang’s account. Absence of access to these assets has had the reverse effect.

Wang also details how wealth has increasingly been turned into a commodity that is passed along to the next generation, feeding an intergenerational stasis as to where occupants stand on the rungs of the social ladder, or an “intergenerational transfer in social status.” “A society of unequal starting lines for the next generation has been formed,” he contends. Wang’s chapter bolsters my claim that we have not just two separate castes in the present but a case of an ever-more-inexorable caste-like system under construction. And given his account of state

structures and benefits impossible for the poor to penetrate and secure, it seems reasonable to hold that where the rich have nearly unlimited agency (should they not be caught at corruption), those lacking means are essentially without any.

Chapter ~~two~~ 2 by Li Zhang serves as an ethnographic companion piece to Wang Feng's, as she compellingly offers snapshots of three arenas of daily urban life—worsening air pollution, psychological stress, and fights for space and land. She elucidates how each of these pressures impacts disparate segments of the urban populace respectively. Thus, for each of these spheres of ordinary existence, Zhang draws upon vivid examples to illustrate how vastly dissimilar the means and the tools for coping with these issues are for the members of the two social groupings at the extreme poles of the social hierarchy. For example, whereas the wealthy can afford expensive air filters, country homes, vacation trips, and even emigration abroad to escape the befouled air, the poor are often consigned to their contaminated abodes and to work (if they can find any) out in the streets.

She argues that “a new form of environmental injustice that reinforces class inequality is emerging.” This is a sort of inequality ~~one~~ that creates different “chambers” in the city, the best of which can be accessed only by advantaged people. “This form of exclusivity regarding the very basic necessity of living is unprecedented and troubling,” she maintains. Once again one obtains a sense of social spaces as closed to entrée as castes are, on the one hand, and as difficult to escape, on the other. Indeed, her story delineates cities as polarized, ~~as~~ places in which quite disparate occupants reside, in groupings whose members ~~are able~~ [please retain “are able...to”—I don't mean to say they ALL exercise agency, but they CAN, respectively, ~~to~~ exercise vastly discrepant degrees of agency.

Following these two introductory pieces, the volume presents five case studies. Moving

from those with the very least agency ~~up~~ to those whose situations grant them much greater degrees of it, agency in higher measure, [I really try to avoid repeating the same word so often in a few lines] admit of much larger amounts, the chapters by Dorothy Solinger (chapter 3three) on the ~~m~~Minimum ~~H~~Livelihood ~~g~~Guarantee, Mun Young Cho (chapter 4four) on migrant factory workers, and Joshua Goldstein (chapter 5five) on garbage collectors showcase portraits of the very poor, noting that ~~But~~ the range of agency to which each group is privy ascends in that order. The other two pieces—Andrew David Field and James Farrer’s on the nightlife of the opulent populace of Shanghai (chapter 6six) and John Osburg’s on networks that more and more exclude the nonpolitical elite (chapter 7seven)—also depict groups whose agency escalates along an upward trending scale.

Solinger’s account of the ~~M~~Minimum ~~L~~Livelihood ~~G~~Guarantee (*dibao*) [the name of this program must have capital letters—like Social Security—it always does] emphasizes the unwillingness of the Chinese government to take measures that would bolster the chances of the children of the urban-registered poor. The analysis underlines the trap that holds these people latched in place. A diminishing portion of officially urban indigent parents are accorded what amount to relatively decreasing allowances.

But a critical feature is that these grants are given without conditions—that is, ~~their~~ recipients are not required to tend to their children’s nutrition, education, or health care—as is ~~the~~ ease mandated in other countries that give “conditional cash transfers.” Moreover, the funds the families receive are too paltry to enable the parents to see to these needs. These arrangements thereby reduce the hopes of the impoverished for departure from destitution. Besides, the chapter argues, opportunities for work are limited to the young and the hale. Policies and attitudes that block the very poor from bettering the lot of their offspring or from finding employment would

seem to cut the agency of the needy down nearly to nil.

Cho's chapter, on the "passionate poor," is a picture of factory workers who gain a sense of "ethical citizenship" by volunteering in social work centers, while they themselves are mistreated in their factories and denied genuine "social membership" (with its political and social rights and economic entitlements) in the larger society. Her analysis presents a mixed case of agency: these workers do have a chance to choose to reinvent themselves as volunteers outside the factory, even as they have no agency whatsoever while laboring. She also suggests that the spectacle of volunteering activities as part of "social governance" (a concept the regime has heralded) converts class-based relationships into moral ones, obscuring the grim fact that these workers are increasingly marginalized from government schemes.

This then is a group whose members are further along the spectrum of agency—or, alternatively, situated differently within what she terms the "multi-layered dimensions of poverty"—than either Solinger's *diba* recipients or the great mass of Goldstein's subjects, the trash gatherers. Cho speaks of "structural, institutional barriers both in the city and in the workplace which, however, fail to stop the protagonists from taking up 'immaterial labor.'" Even while being "stuck in precarious life conditions," these workers somehow manage to "pursue individual strategies for self-development."

Goldstein's contribution plots out the trajectory that urban migrant trash recyclers have pursued over some twenty-five years. He depicts how "a substantial minority" of these garbage workers have found economic success. But this has occurred even as thousands of other roving refuse pickers scramble at the lowest reaches of a network of refuse collectors who market rubbish. In the past, he notes, some of those whom he terms "entrepreneurial trash barons," people who made "large and risky investments and grey market deals with Beijing local

governments and industrial buyers,” rose to the apex of the business by reinvesting profits and luring co-provincials to become their underlings.

Despite the opportunities the trade has offered for the bosses, however, stratification persists, with those at the ground level subsisting in unhealthy, impermanent, crowded shanties. Goldstein also comments that, as of the mid-2010s, “The alluring dynamism of economic mobility of the 1990s has all but disappeared from the sector.” Here it is clear that at least in the past there was a path up and out for the venturesome, a sign that people in this sector have had some room to rely on their own agency and to rise.

Flipping [readers’ the](#) focus to the opposite point in the spectrum of classes, Field and Farrer introduce readers to those near the very peak of the prosperous. These are [members of](#) the tiny segment of society they term “the big-spending *fuerdai*,” that is, the children of the urban ultra-wealthy, whose fortunes were accrued chiefly in the real estate markets. Field and Farrer recount how dance halls, sites for equitably priced enjoyment as recently as the 1980s, were overtaken in the 2000s by nightclubs, scenes of spectacular display for those prepared to put out tens of thousands of yuan on an evening’s spree, sometimes nearly nightly.

The authors’ purpose is to set down “how social class distinction is now expressed, performed, and exulted over in contemporary China.” By the mid-2010s, a VIP arena held aloft on hydraulic pumps lifted the moneyed above the other patrons in the most exclusive of the clubs. Seated there they could lay out 9,000 yuan to ride a train to the table and be waited upon by the very most beautiful showgirls. These outfits serve as barriers to entry into the world (or, one might say, the caste) of the extreme elite. The barriers are set not just by dint of what could be viewed as the “dues” their customers are equipped to expend to partake of their pleasures; but

also by the restricted access that gatekeepers of various sorts permit. In this case, agency among the clients is almost unlimited, as revealed in their choice for unbounded exorbitant consumption.

Last, the subjects who populate the chapter by Osburg arguably do Field and Farrer's wealthy folks' offspring one better. Osburg writes of businesspeople and state officials whose networks are blocked to those without bonds of kinship to top politicians. By investigating the practices of bribery, entertaining, and gift-giving that coalesce into forming elite spheres of extraordinary power and influence, Osburg demonstrates how this virtual nobility is encasing a new class at the ultimate summit of society. He is able to document the impact these private and secretive connections have upon entrepreneurs' businesses, their ethics, and their leisure activities. For these people, outlays can reach as much as three million yuan of spending yearly in just one nightclub. Where actual blood ties are not the bond that undergirds the relationships, "idioms of kinship" take their place, as "big brothers" must meet familial-type obligations that seal the circles against outsiders.

But most arresting in what Osburg found is a shift he documents from "brothers" to "aristocrats." He discovered that this change has occurred as the old *guanxi* connections have been replaced by close friendships and linkages founded on kinship. The upshot is that *beijing*, literally "background" of a most specific sort, especially strong family affiliations, overrides more mundane connections. As inherited *guanxi* has substituted for earned cultivation, Osburg sees a novel form of class consolidation in the making. Only those with the most durable class of bond, that of blood, a blood type that flows just through the veins of the "princelings" (also known in China as the "nobility" or *guizu*), were set to prosper in the mid-2010s. This, then, is the paramount form of caste, a form that, like the castes of India, is hereditary; this too is agency in its most expansive style.

<a>Conclusion

This volume aims to accomplish two ends: first, to narrate the situations of members of two collectivities in China's cities who maintain monumentally disparate lifestyles, and, second, to demonstrate that the divergence is largely the outcome of policies and practices devised and enforced over forty years by the regime's political elite. As we write in 2018, it would appear that there has come to be a kind of finality to the barriers to entry at the top, as well as an absence of an exit door at the bottom. Though there may have been some space for independent action and choice before these formations congealed, the authors detail a kind of looming closure taking hold for those lower down, along with totally unbounded opportunity at the top.

<a>Notes

<notes>

[AU: All chapter acknowledgments will be set as unnumbered notes preceding the first regular note. I've moved the following from note 1.]

We extend much gratitude to Benjamin van Rooij, formerly [Chair](#) in US-

China Business and Law at the University of California, Irvine

[\(UCI\)](#), School of Law, and [D](#)irector of the Long U.S.-

China Institute at [the University of California Irvine UCI](#), for suggesting that we convene a meeting on the

topic of rich and poor China; and to John Long, benefactor of the Long Institute, for his very generous financi-

al support, which ~~that~~ made it possible to hold this workshop, where Dorothy Solinger, Wang Feng, Li Zhang, Joshua Goldstein, and John Osburg launched the initial project.

¹Martin King Whyte, "China's Dormant and Active Social Volcanoes,"

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²Fulong Wu and Chris Webster, “What Has Been Marginalized?”

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³BBC News “China Tops US in Numbers of Billionaires,”

dated October 13, 2016, accessed December 15, 2016, states that as of late 2016 China had 594 billionaires, according to Shanghai publisher Hurun’s annual list, [http://www.bbc.com/news/business-](http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37640156)

37640156. Two hundred forty-

two of these had been added that year, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/15/investing/china-us-billionaires/>.

⁴Using data from China’s National Statistical Yearbook, Jacob Shapiro, “China Is Still Really Poor,”

RealClearWorld, September 16, 2016, notes that urban households in many of China’s interior provinces are earning far less than the per capita average, accessed December 15, 2016, https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2016/09/16/china_is_still_really_poor_112050.html.

http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2016/09/16;china_is_still_really_poor_112050.html.

⁵The term “caste” has been used to characterize the *hukou* (household registration) system in China.

(Fei-Hong Wang, “Conflict, Resistance and the Transformation of the *Hukou* System,”

in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, eds. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (London and NY: Routledge, 2010), 90, reports that in 2008 and 2009 essays on the Chinese internet characterized the *hukou* system as China’s “caste system”); Wenfang Tang and Qing Yang,

“The Chinese Urban Caste System in Transition,”

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“the traditional socialist urban caste system”; and see Mun Young Cho, *The Spectre Specter of*

“*The People*” (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013). But that usage is flawed as it obscures the vast disparities that exist among urban residents.

⁶Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1984), 14.

⁷Azizur Rahman Khan and Carl Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty in China in the Age of Globalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 120; Shi Li, Hiroshi Sato, and Terry Sicular, “Rising Inequality in China: Key Issues and Findings,” in *Rising Inequality in China: Challenges to a Harmonious Society*, ed. Shi Li, Hiroshi Sato, and Terry Sicular (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 37.

⁸Richard G. Fox,

“Resiliency and Change in the Indian Caste System: The Umar of U.P.,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (August 1967): 575; Charles Lindholm, “Caste in Islam and the Problem of Deviant Systems: a Critique of Recent Theory,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 42 (1986): 1–13.

⁹Fox, “Resiliency,” 586.

¹⁰Ekta Singh, “Caste System in India: A Historical Perspective” (PhD diss., Bundelkhand University, 2003), 1.

¹¹Sukhadeo Thorat and Katherine S. Newman,

“Caste and Economic Discrimination: Causes, Consequences and Remedies,”

Economic and Political Weekly (Mumbai) [42, no.](#)

[41](#), (October 13, 2007): 4121. See also Dipankar Gupta, “Caste and Politics: Identity Over System,”

Annual Review of Anthropology, [21](#) (October 21, 2005): 410.

¹²Fox, “Resiliency,” 577, drawing on the work of E.R. Leach; Gupta,

“Caste and Politics,” 411. Also, Nicholas B. Dirks,

“The Original Caste: Power, History and Hierarchy in South Asia,”

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[Michigan, Ann Arbor, November 1988](#)), 23; Thorat and Newman, “Caste,”

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in *Structure and Change in Indian sSociety*, eds., Milton B. Singer and Bernard S. Cohn (Chicago: Aldine,

1968).

¹³On India, see Gupta, “Caste and Politics,”

412. (Of course, wealth did become shakeable in Pparty Cchairman Xi Jinping’s anti-

corruption campaign after 2013.)

¹⁴Dalits are technically outside the caste system, but they are also sometimes referred to as the lowest caste.

¹⁵Jasmine Rao, “The Caste System: Effect on Poverty in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka,” *Global Majority E-*

Journal, 1, no. 2 (December 2010): 100, 101; Thorat and Newman, “Caste,” 4121.

¹⁶Dorothy J. Solinger, “Temporality as Trope in Delineating Inequality: Progress for the Prosperous, Time Warp for the Poor,”

in *Unequal China: The Political Economy and Cultural Politics of Inequality*, eds. Yingjie Guo and Wann

ing Sun [and Yingjie Guo](#) (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 59–76.

¹⁷Han Keqing, ed., *Zhongguo chengshi di baofang tan lu* [Interviews with Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Recipients in Urban China] (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 2012), 95.

¹⁸Nirmal Kumar Bose, "Class and Caste,"

The Economic Weekly (Bombay), (July 28, 1965), 1339; Singh, "Caste System,"

12; Thorat and Newman, "Caste," 4122.

¹⁹Rao, "The Caste System," 101.

²⁰[Ibid., Rao, 101.](#)

²¹[Ibid., Rao, 101, 105](#); Singh, "Caste System"; Thorat and Newman, "Caste,"

4122, 4123. For China, see Lisa M. Hoffman, *Patriotic Professionalism in Urban China: Fostering Talent* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

²²Melanie Manion, "The Challenge of ~~fix margins — I VETRIED AND CANNOT~~ Corruption,"

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[Rupert Hoogewerf](#), chairman of the [Hurun Report](#) and chief researcher at [of Hurun](#)

[Report](#), has reported that investigators were able to identify only about half of the country's billionairess in

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²³Accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-35657107>.

²⁴Gracia Liu-Farrer, "Migration as Class-

based Consumption: The Emigration of the Rich in Contemporary China,"

China Quarterly 226 (June 2016): 504.

²⁵Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 391. Deng Xiaoping did use this phrase with a visiting American delegation in

1985 and again with the Prime Minister of New Zealand in 1986. "邓小平:让一部分人先富起来"

(Deng Xiaoping: First allow one group of people to get rich), 中国共产党新闻网

(News of the Communist Party of China), <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/34136/2569304.html>,
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²⁶Barry Naughton, *Growing Out of the Plan: Chinese Economic Reform, 1978–*

1995 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Dorothy J. Solinger, *From Lathes to Looms: China's Industrial Policy in Comparative Perspective, 1979–*

1982 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), [E](#) chapters 3 and 4.

²⁷Solinger, *From Lathes*, 47.

²⁸Dali L. Yang, *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change Since the Gr*

eat Leap Forward (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), [E](#) chapters 5 and 6. According to Thomas P

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[ress](#), 1992), 143, "The reshaping of agricultural institutions and policies . . .

culminated in the virtually universal adoption of household contracting by 1983."

²⁹Naughton, *Growing Out*, 181ff.

³⁰Barry Naughton, "Implications of the State Monopoly Over Industry and its Relaxation."

Modern China 18, no. 1 (1992): 14–41.

³¹Dorothy J. Solinger, "The Chinese Work Unit and Transient Labor in the Transition [F](#)rom Socialism,"

Modern China 21, no. 2 (April 1995): 155–83.

³²Khan and Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty*, 105.

³³Fulong Wu and Ningying Huang,

“New Urban Poverty in China: Economic Restructuring and Transformation of Welfare Provision,”

Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 48, no. 2 (2007): 178, 180.

³⁴Khan and Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty*, 8, 112. See also Qin Zhou, Gordon G. Liu, Yankun Sun, and Sam A. Vortherms, “The Impact of Health Insurance Cost-

Sharing Method on Healthcare Utilization in China,” *China Journal of Social Work* 9, no. 1–3 (2016): 38–61.

³⁵Shu Y. Ma, “The Chinese Route to Privatization: The Evolution of the Shareholding System Option,”

Asian Survey XXXVIII, no. 4 (1998): 379–

97; and *Property Rights and Economic Reform in China*, eds., Jean C. Oi and Andrew G. Walder (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), especially chapters 1, 6, and 7.

³⁶Wu and Huang,

“New Urban Poverty”; Li, Luo and Sicular’s analysis of income data from 2002 to 2007 uncovered the significance of the impact of the reform of property rights on expanding inequality (Shi Li, Luo Chuliang Luo, and Terry Sicular, “[Overview: Income Inequality and Poverty in China, 2002–2007](#),” in Li, Sato, and Sicular, *Rising Inequality*, 77.

³⁷This is also discussed in Manion, “The Challenge.”

³⁸Deng Quheng and Bjorn Gustafsson, “A New Episode of Increased Urban Income Inequality in China,” in Li, Sato, and Sicular, *Rising Inequality*, 257. The bulk of the layoff took place between 1997 and 2002.

³⁹There have been a number of studies on the topics of inequality, the wealthy, and poverty in the years since 1978. Among them are: *Paying for Progress in China: Public Finance, Human Welfare and Changing Patterns of Inequality*, eds., Vivienne Shue and Christine Wong (London and New

York: Routledge, 2007); *Unemployment, Inequality and Poverty in Urban China*, eds., Shi Li and Hiroshi

Sato (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Li, Sato, and Sicular, *Rising Inequality*; Khan and Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty; Creating Wealth and Poverty in Postsocialist China*, eds., Deborah S. Davis and Wang Feng (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); *The New Rich in China: Future Rulers, Present Lives*, ed., David S. G. Goodman (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008); John Osburg, *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China's New Rich* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Sun and Guo, *Unequal China*; Wang Feng, *Boundaries and Categories: Rising Inequality in Post-Socialist Urban China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); and Fulong Wu, Chris Webster, Sheng He, and Yuting Liu, *Urban Poverty in China* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2010).

⁴⁰ Shi, Sato, and Sicular, "Rising Inequality," 37; Deng and Gustafsson, "A New Episode,"

256, note the [early 2000s](#)' heightened significance of business income (from both self-employment and from owning a private business) [in the early 2000s](#)

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⁴¹ Jinjun Xue and Wei Zhong, "Unemployment, [Poverty](#) and [Income Disparity](#) in [Urban China](#),"

in Li and Sato, *Unemployment*, 44, note that

"inequality worsened because of asset income and rise in the unemployment rate"

between 1988 and 1996.

⁴² Khan and Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty*, 147.

⁴³ Xin Meng, "Economic [Restructuring](#) and [Income Inequality](#) in [Urban China](#),"

in Li and Sato, *Unemployment*, 15–16.

⁴⁴Xue and Zhong, “Unemployment, *p*Poverty,” 13–14.

⁴⁵Shi Li, “Rising *p*Poverty and *i*Its Causes in *u*Urban China,”

in Li and Sato, *Unemployment*, 136. The only citation to Appleton in the bibliography of this Li and Sato book is to a publication dated 2002; this is S. Appleton, J. Knight, L. Song, and Q. Xia,

“Labour Retrenchment in China: Determinants and Consequences,”

China Economic Review 13 (2002): 252–75.

⁴⁶Li, “Rising *p*Poverty,” 137, and Wu and Huang, “New *u*Urban *p*Poverty,” 171.

⁴⁷Carl Riskin, “Has China *r*Reached the *t*Top of the Kuznets Curve?,” in Shue and Wang Wong,

Paying, 42; Manion, “The Challenge,” 43; Christine Wong, “Can the *r*Retreat from *e*Equality

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⁴⁸Wu and Huang, “New *u*Urban *p*Poverty,” 176.

⁴⁹Khan and Riskin, *Inequality and Poverty*, 116.

⁵⁰Wu and Huang, “New *u*Urban *p*Poverty,” 176; Khan and Riskin, *Inequality and *p*Poverty*, 111.

⁵¹Liu-Farrer, “Migration,” 513.

⁵²The works I have in mind here are Cho, *The Specter*; Goodman, *Class*; Goodman, *The New Rich*; Debora

h S. Davis, ed., *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000

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*r*Social Distinction in Urban China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Osburg, *Anxious Wealt*

h; Sun and Guo, *Unequal China*; Luigi Tomba, *The Government Next Door: Neighborhood Politics in Ur*

ban China (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014); Tiantian Zheng, *Red Lights: The Lives of*

Sex Workers in Postsocialist China (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Wang, *Boundaries*; Wu and Webster, *Marginalization*; Jie Yang, *Unknotting the Heart: Unemployment and Therapeutic Governance in China* (Ithaca and London: ILR Press, 2015); T. E. Woronov, *Class Work: Vocational Schools and China's Urban Youth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); and Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise: Middle-*

Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010).

⁵³This is the case for Zhang, *In Search*, 11, and Goodman, *The New Rich*, 2, 3, 5. Deborah S. Davis,

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“financial gains from the post-Mao economic reform” that have been “rapid and impressive.”

Hanser, *Service Encounters*, 4, mentions new socioeconomic conditions” that have

“reconfigured social relations.”

⁵⁴Davis and Wang, “Poverty and Wealth,” 3.

⁵⁵Wu and Huang, “New Urban Poverty,” 178, explain that these newly poor

“might not be able to afford the increasing education costs and thus have to reduce human capital investment.

Consequently, the next generation of impoverished households will still be in a poverty situation.”

See also Davis and Wang, “Poverty and Wealth,” 10–11, and Dorothy J. Solinger,

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Urbanization, 18, no. 1 (April 2006): 177–93.

⁵⁶Tomba, *The Government*, 10.

⁵⁷Zhang, *In Search*, 16–19; Chapter 5 Five.

⁵⁸Cho, *The Specter*, and Yang, *Unknotting*,

also limit the tools and styles of domination that signal to the poor that they are best subdued, handled in way

that subtract them from the mainstream populace.

⁵⁹ Wu et al., *Urban Poverty*; Davis and Wang, “Poverty and Wealth,” 3–5; Fulong Wu and Chris Webster, “Introduction: China’s Urban Marginalization,” in Wu and Webster, *Marginalization*, 11, and Wang, *Boundaries*, 13, emphasize the combination of reforms and legacies.

⁶⁰ Wang, *Boundaries*, especially Chapter 1.

⁶¹ Osburg, *Anxious Wealth*. Similarly, David Wank, *Commodifying Communism: Business, Trust, and Politics in a Chinese City* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), wrote of the same phenomenon a decade and a

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“Poverty and Wealth,” 3.

⁶² Conversation, Wuhan, June 2012. The young man was able to attend college because of two benefactors.

⁶³ Tomba, *The Government*; Zhang, *In Search*; Davis, *The Consumer*; Osburg, *Anxious Wealth*; Goodman, *The New Rich*; Yang, *Unknotting*; Cho, *The Specter*; Wu et al., *Urban Poverty*.

⁶⁴ Giddens, *The Constitution*, 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Giddens, 14.

</notes>