

Globalization and the Chinese City

Along with China's re-emergence on the world stage, the Chinese city is evolving into the globalized world. These changes have brought many new dimensions to Chinese urban life.

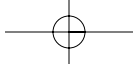
Globalization and the Chinese City introduces readers to the far-reaching global orientation that is now taking place in urban China. The contributors describe overarching globalization through examining the transformation of the built environment in detail. The contributors analyse many urban development processes like urbanization, real estate development, changing landscapes, the industrial restructuring of the second-tier city, and the formation of the city-region in the context of global and local interactions. The geographical coverage of book includes mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan in the Greater China region; border/frontier regions, the cross-boundary city region, and the second tier cities as well as China's globalizing metropolises, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. In examining city development and local practices as part of globalization processes, the global city is treated as a collection of microcosms and concrete places, overcoming the analytical tension of the dichotomy of the East versus West. This flexible and realistic approach is particularly useful to go beyond the restrictive notion of globalization with dealing with the non-Western world.

A comprehensive and well-edited volume, *Globalization and the Chinese City* is an important reference for all of those interested in contemporary urban changes under globalization and a key text for researchers and students of the Chinese economy and society.

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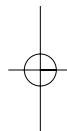
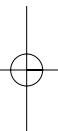
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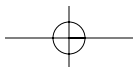


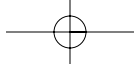
Globalization and the Chinese City

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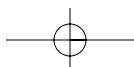
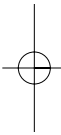
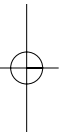
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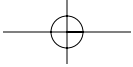
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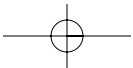
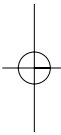
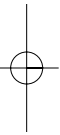
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Preface

In the late autumn of 1984, a group of students in Nanjing University carried a bucket of dark brown liquid over to the university canteen. They did not realise that this ordinary everyday scene in the early days of economic reform was as significant as their predecessors' rushing out of the west gate of Beijing University campus, which marked the 'May Fourth Movement'. This bitter tasting liquid, more like Chinese medicine than coffee, symbolically indicates two themes which have been recurring over the latter two decades of the twentieth century and continuing in the new twenty-first century: globalization and marketization. From drinking coffee as a fashion to actively engaging in selling coffee, these two themes are so well integrated and 'locally-initiated' that nobody at that time imagined them as imposing social changes from the outside world.

This volume originates from RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2003 in London. More chapters have been commissioned to strengthen particular aspects that are important to the topic. While there has been a strong presence of China geography scholarship in North America in meetings such as the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, there have been relatively few such organized sessions in the meetings of the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers. But the response to our call for papers to the conference was surprisingly good – this is reflected in the interesting composition of participants from Western Europe, East Asia, and Great China area in addition to North America. The scholarship is also trans-local – some have received training in both Chinese and Western institutions and furthermore, as the most productive 'Western' urbanists, many have conducted extensive fieldwork in China. Coincidentally, most participants have chosen globalization as the key perspective to reveal the changing urban landscape in China. Their contribution has gone beyond the 'typical' economic analysis of foreign direct investment and explores wider political, social and cultural changes.

The primary mission of this book is to introduce readers to the far-reaching global orientation that is now taking place in urban China. The contributors describe overarching globalization through examining the transformation of the built environment in detail. As such the title of this book – Globalization and the Chinese City – can be interpreted in two different ways: one is more 'classical' – examining how economic globalization has been transforming the Chinese city;

Preface xvii

and the other is slightly more ‘novel’ – the understanding of globalization with multiple spatial scales and ‘longer temporality’, thus examining city development and local practices as part of globalization processes. This flexible and realistic approach treats the global world as a collection of microcosms and overcomes the analytical tension of the East versus West, which is particularly restrictive in the examination of non-Western world. The contributors analyse many urban development processes such as urbanization, real estate development, restructuring the second-tier city, and formation of the city-region in the context of global and local interactions. In terms of geographical coverage, the book covers the Greater China region, including mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as well as the border region and cross-border areas. In sum, the book has made an interesting connection between globalization as forging ‘spaces of flow’ and the Chinese city as a dynamic place of change.

I wish to acknowledge the many debts that I have accumulated in the years that I have conducted research on urban China. My deepest gratitude is to Professor Anthony Gar-On Yeh at the University of Hong Kong, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Science, for enlightening me when I first stepped into the Western academic world. I thank Dr Ya Ping Wang for co-organizing the sessions on urban China in the RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2003 in London, all participants for their contributions, Professor Laurence Ma and John R. Logan for their constructive advices on the book preparation, Peter Sowden at RoutledgeCurzon for his patience, support and advice during the preparation of this volume. The contribution over 35 anonymous reviewers has significantly improved the quality of this volume – their collegial support could not be acknowledged more personally. Finally, I thank the Leverhulme Trust for granting the research fellowship grant enabling me to enjoy precious study leave.

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