

The Chinese City

By Weiping Wu, Piper Gaubatz

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China's cities are home to 10 percent of the world's population today. They display unprecedented dynamism under the country's surging economic power. Their remarkable transformation builds on immense traditions, having lived through feudal dynasties, semicolonialism, and socialist commands. Studying them offers a lens into both the complex character of the changing city and the Chinese economy, society, and environment.

This text is anchored in the spatial sciences to offer a comprehensive survey of the evolving urban landscape in China. It is divided into four parts, with 13 chapters that can be read together or as stand-alone material. Part I sets the context, describing the geographical setting, China's historical urban system, and traditional urban forms. Part II covers the urban system since 1949, the rural–urban divide and migration, and interactions with the global economy. Part III outlines the specific sectors of urban development, including economic restructuring, social–spatial transformation, urban infrastructure, and urban land and housing. Finally, part IV showcases urbanism through the lens of the urban environment, lifestyle and social change, and urban governance.

The Chinese City offers a critical understanding of China's urbanization, exploring how the complexity of the Chinese city both conforms to and defies conventional urban theories and experience of cities elsewhere around the world. This comprehensive book contains a wealth of up-to-date statistical information, case studies, and suggested further reading to demonstrate the diversity of urban life in China.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The book provides the most comprehensive and accessible account of changing Chinese cities so far. The coverage is impressively wide, assuming little prerequisite knowledge of China's historical and geographical contexts. Wu and Gaubatz artfully balance the level of empirical details and generalization and divide the chapters into self-contained and readable pieces, and together they provide an encyclopaedic source of rich information for researchers for many years to come. Some chapters such as infrastructure and environment cover cutting-edge topics about the Chinese city, and others on housing and urban spatial structure reflect well established researches on urban China." Fulong Wu, Bartlett Professor of Planning, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London.

"Comprehensive, detailed, and proficiently explored! Wu and Gaubatz provide a major study of Chinese cities, discussing the history, the social-spatial transformations from the traditional, to the planned, and market economies through the lens of marketization, industrialization, and migration. They also review the globalization process that is affecting major trade of goods, capital, and technology in China. Students as well as scholars will use this as a textbook for their China studies." Karen R. Polenske, Peter de Florez Professor of Regional Political Economy, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"The book is well organized: each of the thirteen chapters starts with sets of questions, guiding the comprehension of the entire chapter. The book clearly explains how marketization, decentralization, industrialization, migration, and globalization help shape contemporary urban systems in China." Yanmei Li, Florida Atlantic University, USA

"The authors have succeeded well in providing a thoughtfully conceived, well-organized, clearly written, and carefully executed account of the modern Chinese city and the essential processes involved in its growth and change. As an accurate and well-documented account of one of the great processes of human change underway during the last half-century, this book is essential reading for students, professionals, China specialists, and urbanists from a variety of disciplines. I highly recommend it." – Clifton W. Pannell, The AAG Review of Books, Department of Geography, University of Georgia, USA

About the Author

Weiping Wu is a Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University. She conducts research on migration and urbanization, university-industry linkages, and China's urban development.

Piper Gaubatz is a Professor of Urban Geography at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She specializes in the study of urban change, development and planning in East Asia.

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