

Overall, though, this does not diminish Sze's substantial contribution to understanding China's eco-desire.

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Cities and Stability: Urbanization, Redistribution, and Regime Survival in China, by Jeremy L. Wallace. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. xii+252 pp. US\$99.00 (cloth), US\$29.95 (paper), US\$15.65 (eBook).

Urban China: Toward Efficient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Urbanization, by World Bank and Development Research Center of the State Council, PRC. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications, 2014. xxxi+624 pp. US\$49.95 (paper), US\$39.99 (eBook).

Two recent books offer contrasting perspectives on urban bias in contemporary China. The main focus of Jeremy Wallace's ambitious book is the relationship between urban bias and authoritarian regime survival. Its ambition is a beautiful marriage of political economy and comparative politics. Analyzing the Chinese case in a broader comparative context, Wallace sees urban bias as motivated by elite concerns about regime threats emanating from urban dwellers. He argues that while in the short run urban bias placates urban residents, in the long run it exacerbates urban concentration, intensifying potential threats to authoritarian regimes. Wallace claims that even though China has pursued an urban-biased development strategy, its authoritarian resilience results from an ability to limit the urbanization process and to avoid the emergence of the urban slums characteristic of major cities elsewhere in the developing world. His main theoretical contribution is to shift the focus in the study of authoritarian survival from elite-centered analyses to regime strategies to address mass-level threats.

In Wallace's theory, the threat to the regime posed by urban dwellers stems from the collective action potential enabled by high levels of urban concentration. In chapter 3, "Cities and Regime Survival," Wallace shows that, cross-nationally, greater urban concentration is associated with more collective action incidents and a greater likelihood of regime breakdown. (It would be great to see this hypothesis tested in the Chinese case with subnational data.) However, Wallace does not clearly specify the interests around which urban masses are likely to mobilize. Where they are located geographically matters more for his argument than whether or how the masses' (or elite) interests are served by state policy.

In contrast to Wallace's view of the origins of urban bias, political economists like Robert Bates (1981) and China specialists like Kam Wing Chan (1994) and Barry Naughton (1995) locate the origins of urban bias not in elite responses to

the threats of urban dwellers but, rather, in the commitment of ruling elites to transform the economy through industrialization—to create a “modern industrial order” (39). In this conceptualization, the creation of the urban working class itself is endogenous, particularly for regimes that are founded in agricultural economies. For the regime, rapid transition from agriculture to industry generates valuable new sources of revenue extraction. By contrast, Wallace’s “urban threat” conceptualization of the origins of urban bias may explain his puzzling assertion that “it is simpler for a state to extract from the agricultural sector” (35–36). In the political economy literature, agriculture is regarded as difficult to tax; and in China, as elsewhere, reliance on agriculture is negatively correlated with the extractive capacity of the state.

Wallace points out that China is an outlier among authoritarian regimes: it has urban-biased policies without extreme urban concentration. Despite the urban bias entailed in forced-draft industrialization that began in the 1950s, the Chinese regime’s “internal passport (*hukou*) system” (30) has kept urbanization rates and levels of urban density well below those of other countries with similar levels of per capita income. In chapter 4, Wallace describes China’s internal passport system as a “loophole to the Faustian bargain of urban bias,” allowing the regime to maintain stability. Geographers like Kam Wing Chan and economists like Vernon Henderson and Kai Yuen Tsui (2008), by contrast, see *hukou* restrictions as an integral part of the system of urban bias in the service of industrialization.

These contrasting perspectives suggest the following questions that Wallace’s thought-provoking work does not fully answer: If the *hukou* system is a loophole and not an integral part of China’s urban-biased policies, what motivated Chinese leaders to restrict rural-to-urban migration? Is the CCP regime unique among authoritarian cases in anticipating the political threat to regime survival that emerges from highly concentrated urban populations? Has China stemmed the urban threat to regime survival? Despite China’s comparatively low levels of urban concentration, are its cities big enough to pose threats to regime survival anyway? In other words, is there a threshold effect? These questions suggest that the explanation for China’s authoritarian resilience may rest with factors other than low urban concentration.

In the second part of the book, Wallace argues that the Chinese state has moved “away from urban bias” (122) through increasingly “pro-rural” (185) policies. By contrast, the 2014 study *Urban China*, produced jointly by the World Bank and the Development Research Center of the State Council, highlights important sources of urban-rural inequality and an urgent need for comprehensive reforms. *Urban China* argues that four aspects of the system continue to embody urban bias: these involve *hukou*, land, and fiscal and personnel policies.

1. *Hukou*. While Wallace describes the recent limited reforms to ease *hukou* restrictions (108) as intended to allow growth while minimizing threats to political stability, he acknowledges that the *hukou* system still creates “second-class”

(140) citizenship for the 170–260 million rural migrants in China’s urban economy. They have unequal access to educational opportunities and social programs, and they receive wages below those of their urban counterparts, reflecting these differences in educational attainment (112). Thus, for the authors of *Urban China*, perpetuation of the *hukou* system has contributed to the emergence of high and rising inequality in China, an issue not addressed by Wallace.

2. *Land*. Wallace focuses on China’s rural land system as providing an important “social safety net” (176) for rural migrants, thereby reducing the potential for unrest. *Urban China* focuses instead on the ability of the Chinese state to requisition land from the rural sector at below-market value as a continuation of, rather than a move away from, urban bias. Municipal governments have provided cheap land to revenue-generating industry, sold land to real estate developers at higher prices, or used land for collateral in taking on debt. The *Urban China* study holds that “China’s spatial and rural-urban inequality has grown and social tensions have emerged as a result of the rapid conversion of rural land at below-market value and the incomplete integration of migrants into China’s cities” (16). Thus, the two studies portray the social implications of *hukou* and land policies differently.

3. *Fiscal*. The abolition of the agriculture tax, introduction of agricultural subsidies, and expansion of intergovernmental fiscal transfers that reach into poor villages to provide public goods are important factors in a “fiscal shift” away from urban bias in Wallace’s account (chap. 5). But other aspects of the fiscal system have the contrary effect of perpetuating urban bias, as seen most notably in the extreme reliance on land revenues in municipal government budgets highlighted in *Urban China*. Moreover, the latter study notes that in the Chinese fiscal system, money does not follow people: “To increase the willingness of local governments to provide social services to migrants, fiscal resources should follow people” (304).

4. *Personnel*. Wallace notes the pressure on rural Party-state officials to maintain social stability (149), while *Urban China* emphasizes that these same officials are ~~encouraged to local opinion~~ by quantitative performance targets to attract investment, often through offers of cheap rural land and labor (55). In undertaking needed reforms, “Changes in land, *hukou*, and fiscal policies would need to be underpinned by a change in the incentive structure for local government decision makers” (*Urban China*, 34). Thus, both studies imply the existence of important institutional complementarities in the process of reform.

Given the importance of inequality in theories of regime survival and transition, examining inequality in the context of China’s urban bias would have extended the theoretical reach of Wallace’s study, and would have enhanced an already rich treatment that links the Chinese case and general comparative theory. As the *Urban China* study reports, “China’s inequality has increased to levels many consider unacceptable. One key reason is the dual structure of the household registration system, which separates urban residents based on their place of birth. While China’s urbanization rate has exceeded 50 percent, not all urban residents have

urban *hukous*. Those without urban *hukous* are unable to enjoy the same set of public services as those with urban *hukous*” (91). The field will benefit from landmark collaborative studies like *Urban China*, which clearly identifies policies that exacerbate inequality and distort growth. The field will also benefit from more studies like Wallace’s that embrace the challenge of putting China in comparative context both empirically and theoretically.

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The Judicial System and Reform in Post-Mao China: Stumbling towards Justice, by Yuwen Li. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. xiv+283 pp. £75.00/US\$129.25 (cloth).

For more than three decades now, the topic of reform has been one of the main themes in academic analyses of Chinese law and justice. Since the end of the 1970s, legal reconstruction and reform in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) have progressed impressively, and the judicial system is a beneficiary as well as among the main promoters of change in the justice arena. In recent years, further reforms of the judiciary has been a pivotal topic among officials and academic communities both within and outside the PRC. Today, while calls for independence of the judiciary from the Communist Party have become increasingly popular, Xi Jinping is conversely endorsing a tighter system of discipline and control over judges.

In the context of these debates, *The Judicial System and Reform in Post-Mao China* is very topical. The book provides an in-depth scholarly analysis of the structures, functioning, and transformation of the judicial system during the last 35 years. It astutely combines an examination of the relevant Chinese legislation and scholarly perspectives, specific case studies, and information obtained through direct observations and interviews. Yuwen Li contextualizes most of the topics with a concise historical introduction, providing a useful lens to observe contemporary developments.

The book is well structured and clearly written. It is organized in four parts, covering the jurisdiction of the courts (chap. 1); relations among the courts and with the other state organs (chap. 2); the professionalization of the judiciary (chap. 3); court procedures in criminal, civil, and administrative lawsuits (chaps. 4–6); and an introduction to the role of the legal profession in the wider context of judicial reforms (chap. 7).

The book concludes by summarizing the transformations that the judiciary has experienced since the early 1980s and the main difficulties it has faced in the process. It explains the role played by the Communist Party and the extent to