

under Mao, including its implementation of land reform and support for rural industries. Part two, “Undermining forces,” first examines how the successful industrious revolution of the early reforms was undercut from the mid-1980s by a switch to policies focused on the growth of cities. State support for the countryside, including investment and fiscal resources, was redirected to benefit urban development. Local rural officials starved of funds squeezed peasant households with extra taxes and fees and engaged in widespread land expropriations. Living conditions nose-dived. Second, Zhan traces the rise of China’s agrarian capitalism. This is driven by a turn in policy circles towards an ideology of agricultural modernization which valorises large-scale corporate farming and regards small household farming as backward and inefficient, effectively erasing the success of the preceding industrious revolution. This ideology is buttressed by its attachment to the question of national security – an enduring Cold War conviction that China must maintain self-sufficiency in grain production at all costs. As agricultural land is increasingly lost to urban development, the question becomes ever-more pressing. In part three, “Comparative perspective,” Zhan provides an international dimension. First, he examines how, in South Africa, a strong agricultural sector based on large-scale agribusiness hinged on the expulsion of black African peasants and tenant farmers from designated white areas, resulting in widespread poverty and underemployment. The final chapter contrasts this with the broader East Asian experience. After the Second World War, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan all implemented agrarian reforms, redistributing land from landlords to peasants, establishing a strong smallholder economy able to sustain a large population. As neoliberal policies have led to increasingly precarious modes of living, the three governments respectively are taking new measures to revitalize their rural economies. China, argues Zhan, should take note. Rural smallholding is the future, not the past.

This timely, thought-provoking and informative book is suitable for both specialists and non-specialists. It constitutes an important contribution to contemporary scholarly debates on the development of agrarian capitalism in China. It will also be particularly useful for undergraduate and graduate students looking to make sense of China’s agrarian reforms and how they relate to broader questions of development. Highly recommended.

JANE HAYWARD
jane.hayward@kcl.ac.uk

The Shenzhen Experiment: The Story of China's Instant City

JUAN DU

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020

376 pp. \$35.00; £28.95

ISBN 978-0-674-97528-6 doi:10.1017/S0305741020000636

As the first book-length monograph on the city of Shenzhen, Juan Du’s *The Shenzhen Experiment* breaks new ground in China studies and contributes to global study of urban space, particularly the model of land expropriation and development that characterizes Special Economic Zones worldwide. Du is a practising architect who has been an observer of Shenzhen since her first visit in 2005, when she was sent to curate an exhibition for the city’s 25th anniversary. Her narrative of Shenzhen’s

development is interwoven with her own awakening to its deep and complicated local history; she begins by describing her own experience stumbling into an urban village (*chengzhongcun*) and realizing that the neighbourhood “simply did not fit into the image of a well-planned ‘instant city’” (p. 5).

Engagingly written and artfully crafted, *The Shenzhen Experiment* seeks to debunk the city’s myths, introducing four misconceptions. Against a “misconception of purpose” that Shenzhen was created in pursuit of wealth and power, Du contends that Deng Xiaoping’s original purpose was simply for China “to no longer be poor” (p. 12). Tracing Shenzhen’s ancient and modern history as a node in larger maritime networks, Du argues against a “misconception of time,” suggesting that Shenzhen’s history began long before 1979. Emphasizing the role of individuals at the grassroots – from Infrastructure Corps soldiers to migrants in the urban villages – Du overturns the “misconception of people”: the mythic “thirty thousand” inhabitants of what would become Shenzhen Municipality in 1979/1980 was actually more than three hundred thousand. Finally, Du addresses what she calls the “misconception of place.” Rather than see Shenzhen as a “fishing village” that became a megacity, she convincingly argues that Shenzhen’s urbanization is characterized not by the “obsolescence of the rural,” but by the persistence of the village in its political, economic and social power (pp. 15–16).

The Shenzhen Experiment is divided into four parts and eight chapters: the former lead the reader through increasingly close-up lenses on the national, the regional, the city and the district. Each of the eight chapters is framed around what Du calls “artifacts”: a song of Shenzhen and Deng’s Southern Tours; the historic fort at Nantou and the Shajing oyster; high-rise towers and a stubborn nail house (*dingzi hu*); and the “corporate village” of Huanggang and the “slum village” of Baishizhou (p. 17). Reinforcing Du’s goal of returning Shenzhen’s history to its inhabitants, almost each chapter starts with a local guide: Jiang Kairu as the songwriter for *The Story of Spring*; Deng Xiaoping on his 1984 and 1992 visits; Cai Guangfu, the manager at Chiwan’s Tianhou temple; the villagers of Shajing; Yang Hongxiang, a photographer in the PLA’s Infrastructure Engineering Corps; Zhang Lianhao, a former sent-down youth and owner of a Caiwuwei nail house; the property developer Wang Shi and Huanggang Village’s Zhuang Shunfu; and Baishizhou villager Chi. Throughout the book, Du includes primary sources like government reports (including gazetteers) and newspaper articles, but she draws primarily on secondary material, particularly essays by local historians and journalistic accounts that cover historical events.

While the style of the book makes it eminently accessible to a popular audience and suitable for teaching in a wide variety of disciplines, it misses an opportunity to engage in the wider social science scholarship. The only scholar to be named in the text is Ezra Vogel (as Deng’s biographer), but the themes of the book invite dialogue with fields like business history, urban history, the Chinese diaspora, geography, migration and political science, among others. As one example, Elizabeth Perry and Sebastian Heilmann’s idea of “guerrilla policy making” (*Mao’s Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*, Harvard University Asia Center, 2011) would buttress Du’s conclusion that Shenzhen was a product of decentralized power, local innovation and bottom-up initiative (pp. 311–312). In addition to the absence of scholarly literature, the book’s references to historical documents come mainly from newspaper articles, making it difficult to trace original sources. History written with derivative sources introduces infelicities of both fact and interpretation. For instance, Sun Yat-sen did not lead the 1911 Wuchang Uprising (p. 119) and the meritocracy of imperial China’s civil service examination (p. 115) is a myth that has long been questioned by historians.

In the sections that put Du's training as an architect and a planner on full display, *The Shenzhen Experiment* shines. Prominent examples include her examination of the spatial, as in her analysis of the geographical logic of the 1982 Master Plan (p. 60); her perceptive eye for architectural detail, like her tracing of Tangtou Village's 'socialist housing blocks' to traditional village layouts (p. 274); and her understanding of the technical process of construction, as in her explication of the unprecedented engineering feat of the International Trade Center's "Shenzhen speed" (pp. 170–171). Du's experience allows her to unpack not only the technicality of building and construction, but also its intricate politics, from the motivations behind the workers to the interests of municipal leaders. In the final chapters, Du's critical lens takes the reader behind the scenes of the urban village – Caiwuwei, Huanggang and Baishizhou – underscoring local history and untangling complex politics. For the landscape of Shenzhen's contemporary urban condition, Juan Du is herself the most skilful of the book's local guides.

DENISE Y. HO
denise.ho@yale.edu

Xun zu Zhongguo: Taishang, Guangdong moshi yu quanqiu zibenzhuyi (Rent-seeking Developmental State in China: Taishang, Guangdong Model and Global Capitalism)

WU JIEH-MIN

Taipei: National Taiwan University Press (NTU and Harvard-Yenching Academic Book Series), 2019

464 pp. NT\$600.00

ISBN 978-986-350-341-5 doi:10.1017/S030574102000065X

The recent book *Rent-seeking Developmental State in China: Taishang, Guangdong Model and Global Capitalism* by Wu Jieh-min has joined the debate on the rise of China and its implications for the global economy. Differentiating itself from the approaches that attribute China's growth to either capitalism from above or capitalism from below, Wu's book contributes to the increasing emphasis on growth impetus from foreign firms (the capitalism from outside thesis). The book highlights the role of *Taishang* – Taiwanese businessmen and capitalists – in connecting China to the global economy by setting up production in China and contributing to its export-led growth.

Wu first reviews claims and analyses of how and why export-oriented industrialization is important in understanding China's rise. As an epitome of the open-door policy, the Guangdong model is an appropriate prototype for understanding China's development. This model, using various export processing zones with a particular type of FDI through *Taishang*, turned Guangdong into a world factory shop and connected China to global capitalism. Wu then introduces two key mechanisms of the Guangdong model: institutionalized rent-seeking and differential citizenship.

Instead of debating whether rent-seeking harms growth, Wu asks how rent-seeking and growth can co-exist. His answer is that institutionalized rent-seeking (*jigou hua xunzu*) is a key mechanism of growth in the Guangdong model. Wu demonstrates how rent-seeking in Guangdong was framed through various types of service fees, was agreed among different government units and between the local government and the *Taishang*, and was institutionalized through contracts (pp. 61, 165). Wu illustrates the dynamics through a detailed ethnographic account of the actual workings