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# New Mentalities of Government in China

Edited by  
David Bray and Elaine Jeffreys

ROUTLEDGE  


# **New Mentalities of Government in China**

**Edited by David Bray and Elaine Jeffreys**

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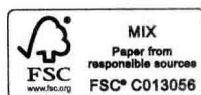
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# New Mentalities of Government in China

China continues to transform apace, flowing from the forces of deregulation, privatization, and globalization unleashed by economic reforms which began in late 1978. The dramatic scope of economic change in China is often counterposed to the apparent lack of political change as demonstrated by continued Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule. However, the ongoing dominance of the CCP belies the fact that much has also changed in relation to practices of government, including how authorities and citizens interact in the management of daily life.

*New Mentalities of Government in China* examines how the privatization and professionalization of 'public' service provision is transforming the nature of government and everyday life in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The book addresses key theoretical questions on the nature of government in China and documents the emergence of a range of 'new mentalities of government' in China. Its chapters focus on areas such as clinical trials, conceptualizing government, consumer activity, elite philanthropy, lifestyle and beauty advice, public health, social work, volunteering, and urban and rural planning.

Offering a topical examination of shifting modes of governance in contemporary China, this book will appeal to scholars in the fields of anthropology, history, politics, and sociology.

**David Bray** is Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Sydney, Australia. He is the author of *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform* (2005).

**Elaine Jeffreys** is Associate Professor, School of International Studies, University of Technology Sydney, Australia. Her recent publications include *Prostitution Scandals in China: Policing, Media and Society* (Routledge, 2012).

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**For Barry Hindess and Michael Dutton, whose rethinking of the nature of government and government in China inspired this book.**



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David Bray and Elaine Jeffreys  
August 2015

## **Note on Chinese names**

Names in Chinese are usually presented as family name followed by personal name. There are two exceptions: the first is when someone with a Chinese family name has a non-Chinese personal name; the second is when someone with a Chinese name has indicated through publication that they wish to be known by their personal name followed by their family name.



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# 1 New mentalities of government in China

## An introduction

*David Bray and Elaine Jeffreys*

*New Mentalities of Government in China* looks at recent transformations in the nature of government and the governance of everyday life in the People's Republic of China (PRC). China continues to transform apace, flowing from the forces of deregulation, privatization, and globalization unleashed by economic reforms which began in late 1978. The dramatic scope of economic change in China is often counterposed to the apparent lack of political change as demonstrated by continued Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule. However, the ongoing dominance of the CCP belies the fact that much has also changed in relation to practices of government, including how authorities and citizens interact in the management of everyday life – for example, through the roles played by professionals, volunteers and 'everyday experts' in public affairs. This book addresses key theoretical questions on the nature of government in China and documents the emergence of a range of new mentalities of government in (and about) China via chapters on clinical trials, conceptualizing government, consumer activity, elite philanthropy, lifestyle and beauty advice, public health, social work, volunteering, and urban and rural planning.

This chapter introduces the key concepts, themes, and contents of the book as follows. We first introduce the concept of 'government', defined as guiding the changing imbrication of 'people' and 'things', and outline the hybrid processes wherein new mentalities of government can emerge. We then explore these themes in relation to specific fields of public life by summarizing the subject matter and arguments of the other ten chapters that comprise the book.

### **Key concepts and themes: government, governmentality, and hybridity**

*New Mentalities of Government in China* extends Michel Foucault's work on 'governmentality' to consider questions of government in present-day China (Foucault 1991 [1978]). Defined as 'the conduct of conduct', the concept of governmentality is concerned with the 'how' of governing – how we govern, how we are governed – and the relationship between the state, the government of others, and the government of ourselves – or any more less calculated means of directing how we behave and act (Dean 1999: 2). As Foucault (2007: 193) explains, the