

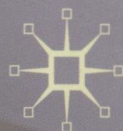
International Political Economy Series

# Marginalization in Urban China

Comparative Perspectives

Edited by

Fulong Wu and Chris Webster



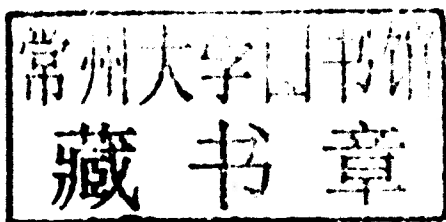
# Marginalization in Urban China

## Comparative Perspectives

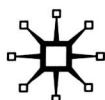
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# Preface

Urban inequality has been a classic topic in urban research. Current studies focus mainly on social polarization in global cities and increasing impoverished population in developing countries. While there are specific studies on urban poverty in China, the attention has tended to focus on poverty line definition, low-income conditions and the plight of the unemployed. We feel that this narrow perspective of urban poverty is too restrictive for an understanding of the wide range of social changes in contemporary China that have led to the massive accumulation of wealth and the formation of a marginalized population. The term 'marginalization', though controversial, places an emphasis on relative changes in well-being and social status in addition to physical deprivation and absolute poverty. Used in this way, it is similar to aspects of the European notion of 'social exclusion', which may well be relevant to the Chinese situation. This volume explores the idea of marginalization. It is a collective effort to describe processes of property right changes, rural to urban migration, and state programmes that empower some while marginalize others. Although contributors do not all share the same view, their narratives all go beyond the economic perspective and beyond the idea of absolute poverty. Together, they help construct a comparative perspective on the process of marginalization in urban China.

The book originated from a UK Economic and Social Research Council and UK Department of International Development joint-funded project on 'Urban Poverty and Property Rights Changes in China'. The financial support of these agencies (RES-167-25-0005) is gratefully acknowledged. Following this research, we organized a workshop in June 2008, to which we invited renowned urban scholars on social inequality and active researchers from China. This volume is a collection of selected papers from that workshop. The authors have revised their papers substantially to reflect the workshop discussion and to develop the comparative perspective. We would like to thank Dr Shenjing He, who was postdoctoral fellow on the project, for helping organize the workshop. Alan Smart provides suggestions on some chapter. We also wish to thank many people for helping with the production of this edited volume, in particular, Bruce Hunter, Yuan Yuan, Yi Li, and Margaret Roberts.

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**Chris Hamnett** is Professor of Geography at King's College London. He has been at King's since 1995. He is regarded as a leading British expert on housing wealth and inheritance and a leading researcher in the fields of social polarization, gentrification and housing. He has authored or co-authored a number of books including *Cities, Housing and Profits* (1989), *Shrinking the State: the Political Underpinnings of Privatization* (1998) *Winners and Losers: Home Ownership in Modern Britain* (1999), and *Unequal City: London in the Global Arena* (2003).

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**Chris Webster** is Professor of Urban Planning and Head of School at the School of City and Regional Planning of Cardiff University. He is Honorary Professor of Urban Planning, Department of Real Estate and Construction, University of Hong Kong and a Member of the Advisory Committee of the International Association for China Planning. He is co-editor of the journal *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*. His research and writing

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