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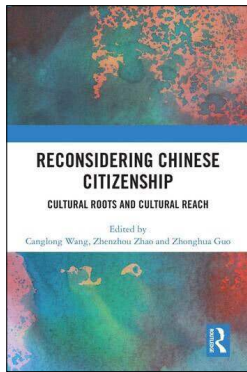
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Reconsidering Chinese Citizenship: Cultural Roots and Cultural Reach.

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The study of Chinese citizenship has long been dominated by an institutional paradigm, focusing on the state's role in defining rights and the structural inequalities inherent in the *hukou* system (Solinger 1999; Vortherms 2021). While this scholarship successfully highlights the political and social struggles for recognition and redistribution (Isin and Turner 2002), it often risks reducing citizenship to a static legal status granted or withheld by the state. *Reconsidering Chinese Citizenship: Cultural Roots and Cultural Reach*, edited by Canglong Wang, Zhenzhou Zhao, and Zhonghua Guo, offers a timely intervention in this debate. By shifting the lens from institutional constraints to cultural practices, the volume argues that Chinese citizenship is not solely a legal designation but a dynamic "site of struggle" (p. 9) in which various actors, including state institutions and grassroots activists, negotiate boundaries through cultural resources. This collection, originally published as a special issue of *Citizenship Studies*, fills a critical gap by analysing how cultural ideals, including Confucianism, religious spirituality, and ethnic traditions, inform contemporary citizenship practices in China.

The editors structure the volume around the dual concepts of "cultural roots" and "cultural reach." In the introductory chapter, they directly challenge the notion of culture as merely a tool for the state's "monolithic interpretation" (p. 6). Instead, they argue that while the state employs culture to shape governable subjects, individuals concurrently draw upon historical and spiritual "roots" to extend their "reach," thereby broadening opportunities for civic participation and identity negotiation. This framework transcends the simplistic binary of state repression versus societal resistance, presenting a more nuanced perspective in which citizenship offers an alternative vision to "change the conventional governance paradigm, which prioritises the role of the state and collectivism" (p. 2).

The volume adopts a thematic structure, addressing historical foundations, ethnic governance, and grassroots educational and religious movements. Instead of presenting a singular definition of the Chinese citizen, the chapters collectively delineate a landscape of "differentiated citizenship" shaped by cultural factors. Chapter

One establishes the historical context by tracing the evolution of the citizen concept from the "deep-rooted concept of Hua-Yi segregation" (p. 15) to the development of "equal political status" (p. 20). Zhonghua Guo demonstrates that this transition was facilitated not by Western influence, but by mid-Qing debates surrounding the "Awakening by the Great Truth" (*Dayi juemi lu* 大義覺迷錄) case (p. 19). He contends that the early modern conception of citizenship was not simply a legal import from the West but rather possessed "both internal and external cultural roots" (p. 28). This shift represented a domestic political strategy initiated by the Manchu rulers to replace "hierarchical status" with a unified political identity, thereby legitimising their authority over a multi-ethnic empire (p. 28). This historical analysis provides essential context for understanding the ongoing tension between ethnic identity and state loyalty in contemporary governance.

Chapter Two examines contemporary governance through Taihui Guo and Tianlong You's study of the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, which vividly illustrates the concept of "authoritarian cultural citizenship" (p. 37). Drawing on fieldwork in an intercultural region, the authors demonstrate how the state uses local cultural hierarchies to construct a "governable population" (p. 32). By conferring official recognition and titles to selected religious and tribal elites, the state positions traditional leaders as intermediaries of governance. This chapter effectively highlights the extent of state influence, showing that cultural recognition serves as a double-edged sword: it offers minority groups limited inclusion, contingent upon their adherence to state-sanctioned norms of stability.

Conversely, Liangliang Zhang's analysis of "affective cultural citizenship" (p. 51) in Chapter Three demonstrates how citizens draw on cultural roots to establish autonomous spaces. By examining the emergence of "experimental education" (*shiyan jiaoyu* 實驗教育) communities, particularly those adopting Steiner and Chinese Traditional Culture pedagogies, Zhang identifies activists who withdraw from the state's mainstream system, which they criticise as "programmatically" and inhibitive to wisdom (p. 61). Rather than engaging in direct confrontation with the Party-state, these individuals construct "community-based cultural citizenship" (p. 51) for what Zhang describes as "value minorities," or individuals who "misfit" normative definitions of citizenship (p. 54). This case study illustrates the volume's central argument: in the absence of formal political avenues, culture serves as the principal means by which citizens assert their "right to be different and to belong" (p. 62).

The greatest strength of this volume lies in its refusal to treat "Chinese culture" as a monolithic entity synonymous with state ideology. Through a range of case studies, including Canglong Wang's analysis of immigrant parents teaching Confucian classics (*rujia jingdian* 儒家經典) as an expression of "cosmopolitan cultural responsibility" (Chapter Four), Thomas K. C. Tse and S. H. Chan's study of faith-based activism in Hong Kong (Chapter Six), and Zhenzhou Zhao's bottom-up inquiry (Chapter Seven), the book shows that cultural citizenship often transcends national boundaries and is shaped by spiritual motivations. Zhao's research, for example, shows that university teachers, as institutional agents, respond to state directives by prioritising individual "spirituality" (*jingshen* 精神) over political loyalty (p. 132). Collectively, the contributors illustrate how the "ideals of citizenship," including inclusion and recognition,

are being redefined through non-Western ontologies, providing an alternative to governance models that prioritise collectivism over individual agency.

The theoretical versatility of this volume opens promising avenues for future research, especially concerning the intersection of “cultural roots” and digital culture. Although the contributors ground their analysis in foundational cultural forms such as Confucianism, Islam, Christianity, and ethnicity, the framework established in this work provides a valuable lens for future scholars to investigate digital communities and cybernationalism. The text’s capacity to inspire such applications demonstrates its generative potential, indicating that the concept of cultural reach can significantly enhance understanding of the digital landscape in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, *Reconsidering Chinese Citizenship* represents a landmark contribution and an empirically rich collection that fundamentally challenges established narratives. The volume encourages readers to look beyond the *hukou* system and the Party-state apparatus to understand how citizenship is experienced and negotiated through the cultural fabric of daily life. This book is indispensable for sociologists, political scientists, and scholars of Chinese studies seeking to comprehend the resilience and adaptability of societal actors in an authoritarian context. As the Chinese state continues to promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the editors have produced a timely and insightful guide to the cultural roots of citizenship, one that is poised to shape the field for years to come.

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JIANG FU, Lan. 2024. *Confucius revisité. Du marchand confucéen à l'entrepreneur du XXI^e siècle : Le phénomène rushang dans la Chine contemporaine*.

(Confucius revisited. From Confucian merchant to twenty-first century entrepreneur: The *rushang* phenomenon in contemporary China). Paris: Hémisphères Éditions, Maisonneuve & Larose.

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Based on Lan Jiang Fu’s doctoral dissertation defended in 2021, *Confucius revisité. Du marchand confucéen à l'entrepreneur du XXI^e siècle : Le phénomène rushang dans la Chine contemporaine* (Confucius revisited. From Confucian merchant to twenty-first century entrepreneur: The *rushang* phenomenon in contemporary China) provides a fascinating account of the affinities between traditional Chinese culture, companies, and private entrepreneurs in China. Having been a prime target of criticism during the Maoist era, Confucianism’s reemergence in Chinese society from the end of the twentieth century onward has been spectacular. The Party-state’s increasing references to Chinese traditional culture and Confucianism are particularly noteworthy, from speeches by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao with Confucian emphasis on “harmonious society” (*hexie shehui* 和諧社會), to Xi Jinping’s strong endorsement of Confucianism under the “Chinese dream” (*Zhongguo meng* 中國夢).

This book draws from a body of scholarship on the resurgence of Confucianism in contemporary China. In *The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China*, Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval shed light on the multifaceted Confucian practices that emerged in China after the 1980s. They examined in a sophisticated way both grassroots Confucian initiatives and the official discourse on Confucianism, reflecting on why it is difficult to examine them through the concept of “religion” (*zongjiao* 宗教) imported from the West. In line with this literature, Lan Jiang Fu’s book discusses the entanglements between capitalism, “Confucian” entrepreneurs, and the Party-state in post-Maoist China.

The book builds on rich and nuanced ethnographic fieldwork conducted in three private companies in 2016–2020 and carried out in three Chinese coastal cities (in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Guangdong Provinces) characterised by high rates of development since the