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Revolutionary Becomings is a well-written and engaging resource for students with specific interests in Chinese history and film, as well as anyone working in film studies or more broadly media studies. Not only does the book do an excellent job showing the interconnectedness between film and other modes of artistic representation such as literature and photography, but it also smoothly and effectively integrates film analysis with production studies to provide an alternative model for studying historical turning points through media. As Qian observes on p. 4, anglophone scholarship on Chinese documentary film has paid considerable attention to independent documentaries from the 1990s to the present, while neglecting its impact in earlier decades. Ying Qian's project reveals an impressive effort to find and work with inaccessible (or no longer-extant) materials, and my one minor suggestion is that it would be helpful to see Chinese characters alongside names and titles in pinyin.

2 Ya-Wen Lei, *The Gilded Cage: Technology, Development, and State Capitalism in China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023; xiv + 398 pp. with figures, tables, abbreviations, appendix, notes, references, and index: 9780691212821, US\$35.00 (pbk)

Reviewed by: Dani Fadillah, *Universitas Ahmad Dahlan & Nanjing Normal University*, and Zhou Huiquan, *Nanjing Normal University*

5 In Ya-Wen Lei's *The Gilded Cage: Technology, Development, and State Capitalism in China*, we delve into a journey that transformed China's economy and society, a journey spanning from the era of Chen Yun to the current leadership under Xi Jinping. From the mid-2000s onward, China has progressively pivoted away from labour-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing towards a socioeconomic development model anchored in science and technology. Lei meticulously delineates the contours of this techno-developmental paradigm and the resultant emergence of techno-state capitalism, narrating the experiences of individuals whose lives have been profoundly altered – both positively and negatively – by China's swift ascent to economic and technological pre-eminence.

1 This book is divided into several parts. The first chapter provides an introduction outlining the current economic developments in China, both domestically and globally, which have enabled it to compete as one of the world's respected giants. Chapter 1 predominantly serves as a general introduction to the book. The second chapter titled 'From labor to land and technology' illustrates how China, once reliant on cheap labour to drive its economy, has boldly ventured into utilizing various alternative resources within the country. This includes significant investments in public infrastructure, which have proven to contribute to the country's national economic growth.

In the third chapter, titled 'The turn to techno-development', the discussion begins with how local governments are daring to play a role in national development. Local authorities are no longer solely focused on stimulating their respective regional economies; instead, their mindset is geared towards ensuring that their regions become integral to the national economy. They are willing to take risks by changing old paradigms when dealing with investors. Chapter 2 recounts how, in the past, local governments

merely provided land and cheap labour to support investors' production, whereas now they also provide guidance on future development concepts from the outset of an investor's business in their region.

The fourth chapter, titled 'Obsolete capital and labor', outlines how outdated resources can still be maximized to support China's economy, alongside the continuous pursuit of acquiring cutting-edge production resources. The essence lies in ensuring that alongside the latest labour and technology advancements driving the country's economy, obsolete resources do not go to waste.

Chapter 5, titled 'Robotization', elucidates how the Chinese government continues its modernization efforts. While the previous chapters discussed the utilization of outdated resources to support economic development, this chapter acknowledges that there will come a time when these resources are no longer viable. China must undertake concrete preparations and ensure the availability of adequate funding, as well as the necessary technology and work systems so as to secure its position at the forefront and to prevent any loss of competitiveness.

Chapter 6, titled 'The rise of gig tech', portrays how the Chinese government has implemented policies that foster the emergence of numerous information and communication technology companies in China. These companies contribute to the nation's development.

Chapter 7, titled 'From factories to platforms', illustrates how the emerging information and communication technology companies in China are gradually transforming the country from merely providing land and cheap labour to foreign investors into a nation supplying various needs of the global community. These companies are becoming market players.

Chapter 8, titled 'Coding elites', further illustrates various communication technology companies that have emerged and developed in China, some of which have been facilitated by the Chinese government to expand their businesses. Even companies such as Tencent have become international capitalist powerhouses in a country that espouses the world's most significant communist ideology.

Finally, in Chapter 9, titled 'Rewiring techno-state capitalism', the book discusses China's position at a crossroads. As the world's largest communist country, it must determine its path forward. Will it adhere to the principles of communism that have been the foundation of the state, or will it find a specific formulation in its governance, which, whether acknowledged or not, is slowly moving towards capitalism?

Utilizing pioneering fieldwork and extensive interviews with a diverse array of stakeholders including managers, entrepreneurs, workers, software engineers, and local governmental authorities, Lei elucidates the stark disparities in valuation between sectors labelled as 'high-end' and 'low-end' within the economy. She further examines the extensive proliferation of technical and legal mechanisms aimed at monitoring and regulating both labour and capital.

Lei delineates how China's ascent is uniquely characterized by its compressed developmental timeline, intricate dynamics between the authoritarian state and the burgeoning yet unpredictable tech sector, and an ideological amalgamation of nationalism, technological veneration, and meritocratic principles.

Analogous to America's Gilded Age, some observers have drawn parallels to China's remarkable metamorphosis. However, Lei's thought-provoking analysis portrays this

transformation as being akin to a gilded cage, wherein the amalgamation of state authority and technological capital perpetuates widening socioeconomic disparities and engenders novel forms of social marginalization.

The Gilded Cage is a compelling exploration of China's rapid ascent to technological and economic dominance, providing a nuanced view of the nation's shift toward state-led techno-development. One of the book's key strengths is its in-depth analysis of the intersection between technology, labour, and state capitalism, supported by extensive fieldwork and interviews with various stakeholders. Lei successfully highlights the stark social and economic inequalities that have emerged in China's development model, offering a critical perspective that challenges overly optimistic views of its growth. However, the book's dense theoretical discussions may pose a challenge for readers unfamiliar with the intricate details of China's political economy. Academics, policymakers, and those interested in the socioeconomic impacts of state capitalism and technological development in China will find this book particularly valuable.

Chang Tan, *The Minjian Avant-Garde: Art of the Crowd in Contemporary China*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2023; xv + 205 pp. with figures, abbreviations, colour plates, map, notes, bibliography, and index: 9781501773181, US\$46.95 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Yanhua Zhou, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute and University of Arizona

Since 2008, contemporary Chinese art has shifted from a market-driven approach to a 'social turn', emphasizing engaging with and serving the majority, and raising awareness of the lower strata of society. Although the social turn dates back to the period immediately following the end of the Mao era, this history has received limited scholarly attention. Chang Tan's *The Minjian Avant-Garde: Art of the Crowd in Contemporary China* is a timely book-length study reconfiguring the history of the *minjian* (民间, literally 'among the people'). In this book, Tan zooms the discussions on *minjian* whom he redefines as the volatile 'non-elite public', exploring transformed components and connotations of *minjian* in post-Mao China and their impact on the relationship between art and society. In this book, *minjian* encompass not only the groups that art engages with but also the approaches artists use. On the one hand, *minjian* generate collaboratively made, site-specific objects that affiliate with mass-produced crafts and commodities, distinguishing these objects from fine art; on the other hand, *minjian* form collective bodies from the lower strata of society, such as the poor, rural, and downtrodden (p. 4).

Chronologically structured, the first five chapters demonstrate the approaches of *minjian* in avant-garde art in post-Mao era. Starting with addressing how the shift from homogenous masses into a multitudinous *minjian* reconfigured post-Mao public interests, Chapter 1 examines Mao Xuhui's collages and Huang Yong Ping's institutional critiques from the 1980s. While both artists' avant-garde practices approached the *minjian*, their methods still reflected a desire for recognition by the global art world. Chapter 2, however, presents a different narrative, by showcasing Qiu Zhijie's critical