



China Hub

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The Gilded Cage: Technology, Development, and Capitalism

Dr. Ya-Wen Lei

Is China's extraordinary transformation comparable to America's Gilded Age as claimed by some? Ya-Wen Lei argues no. Lei explores the transformation of people's lives, for better or worse, by China's techno-development regime. China has been shaped by the relationship between its authoritarian state and tech companies and an ideology that fuses nationalism with modernism, technology, and meritocracy. Lei concludes that China has instead created a Gilded Cage of rising inequality and new forms of social exclusion.



Ya-Wen Lei is Associate Professor of Sociology, Harvard University, where she is also affiliated faculty at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

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