The final empirical chapter (five) turns to online rumours. It explores how rumouring redefines politics in China, and how especially the government's insistence on curbing "false rumours" ironically prompts ever more rumour-mongering. Liu revisits the cases he explored in previous chapters while adding earthquake rumours from Shanxi, a pollution scare from Jiangsu, and a mass incident from Guangdong. He concludes that rumouring practices are not, as is sometimes assumed, an ineffective, low-energy form of "slacktivism." They instead inspire solidarity, create "rumouring publics," and ultimately serve as a frequently gleeful critique of pervasive official attempts to discredit citizens who spread politically inconvenient information.

In his conclusion, Liu summarizes his main findings and relates them to popular questions and theoretical arguments about mobilization, technology and democratization. Maybe most importantly, Liu concludes by showing how his syncretic framework for understanding contentious communication can be applied comparatively. To this end, Liu contrasts American civil-rights activities from 1964 with the 2011 Egyptian uprising and the high-profile Wukan protests of 2011. Liu unpacks the striking continuities in these cases: he shows how his communication-centred approach avoids technological determinism while illustrating that "it is people that take different contexts into consideration, then strategically leverage new advantages while minimizing disadvantages from ICTs for communicative, collective purposes" (p. 167).

This is a compelling study, and a powerful argument in favour of a holistic approach to social movement research. There is then only very little to criticize about this impressive monograph. Scholars favouring media-centric or technology-focused approaches to understanding "affordance" may contend that Liu's concerns about technological determinism may not be as pronounced in the literature as he suggests, especially in fields like science and technology studies. A more general shortcoming of the book is that its cases predate the Xi administration's attempts to regulate digital communication and mobility more rigidly. Of course, the book could not have anticipated later developments, so this is mainly a wish to see the approach of this monograph extended to newer cases. *Shifting Dynamics of Contention* certainly spells out a promising path for precisely such follow-up work, and that makes it essential reading, certainly for graduate and post-graduate students of contention and digital technology in China, but also for scholars hoping to contrast the frequently Euro- and US-centric literature on social movements with original, comparative work from China.

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How have China's dramatic changes since the 1980s shaped Chinese youth? This question has fascinated many researchers and China-observers. Most

English-language studies published outside China have predominantly focused on urban youth, using qualitative methods. This book by Chunling Li, professor of sociology and youth studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, covers various social groups of Chinese youth, drawing mainly on large-scale surveys. It comprises a selection and translation of Li's journal articles and book chapters published in Chinese between 2008 and 2018, and it deals mainly with China's millennials – those born between the 1980s and the mid-1990s. The book has 16 chapters, including a literature review of Chinese youth studies (chapter one). Li's overall argument is that, exposed to China's dramatic transformation during their formative years, the millennials form a sociological generation with distinctive values, attitudes, lifestyles and behaviours. However, this shared generational identity cannot break down the vast intragroup inequalities based on class and gender.

As a group, this generation enjoys unprecedented individual freedom, opportunities for personal development, material wealth, education opportunities (many have received higher education), and investment and care from their parents and grandparents. They have access to the outside world and embrace consumerism. As digital natives, they actively use the internet for communication, information, financial activities and professional purposes. Consequently, they are generally more open-minded and self-expressive than previous generations. For example, compared with older people, the millennials more strongly believe in democracy and favour sustainable development. They are also more strongly engaged in public affairs and show weaker national identification (chapters three and 15). In short, the millennials are the main beneficiaries of China's transformation. Nevertheless, they also have to face the unique set of challenges, problems and risks brought about by the same process (see e.g. chapter 14). In chapters six to eight, Li presents empirical findings about youth's employment (chapters six and seven) and housing conditions (chapter eight), the two widely known challenges faced by contemporary Chinese youth. She also offers suggestions for policymaking.

Meanwhile, throughout the book, Li demonstrates that both the benefits and problems for this generation are unevenly distributed based on class – most strikingly along the rural–urban divide – and gender. Rural youth and women constitute the majority of China's increasing number of "NEETs" (youth "not in education, employment or training") (chapter six). With urbanization, most millennials live in the cities, but form two contrasting groups: higher education students/graduates versus rural migrant workers. The former enjoy the prospect of joining the new middle class (one can read about this group in chapters 12 and 13). In contrast, for the migrant workers, who constitute the working-class core, upward mobility is foreclosed due to the restrictions of the *hukou* (household registration) system and their lack of qualifications (chapters four, five, seven and eight).

The rural–urban divide is, however, also striking among college students/graduates – the generally privileged group – themselves. Since the 2010s, inequality between urban and rural youth in higher education has grown. Most students at key universities come from urban households. About 80 per cent of those at second- or third-tier institutions (including vocational institutions) come from rural households. At the top ten universities, about two-thirds of students hail from urban households (chapters four and five). In particular, rural women make up a disproportionately small percentage of college students (chapter 11), even though women now in general outnumber men in higher education (chapter nine). In 2014, for example, the employment rates of college graduates from urban families and rural families were respectively 88 and 70 per cent and their average monthly salaries were respectively 3,443 yuan and 2,835 yuan. Significantly more urban graduates than rural graduates entered

the public sector and foreign enterprises, the two most desirable types of employment for college graduates (chapter seven). Compared with their counterparts, rural college graduates also constitute the majority of the "ants," an epithet for educated youth living in poor conditions on the city periphery (chapters four and six).

Gender-based inequality in education and employment is systematically dealt with in chapters nine, ten and eleven. Li shows that in line with the global reversed gender trend in education, in China since the 1990s, girls have been outperforming boys in school and in the national college entrance exams. Women students have been outnumbering men students at higher education institutions. However, this has not helped women in the labour market, where they face greater obstacles in finding jobs than men and they tend to end up in lower status jobs. The gender-based labour market discrimination is further discussed in chapter ten, which offers a broader analysis of the dynamics of gender inequality in China.

The book's title does not quite match its content. While "inequality" is comprehensively dealt with, there is little systematic account of "diversity." There is also little discussion of the relationship between "diversity" and "inequality." One may also miss a greater engagement with relevant social theories (e.g. those on social change, youth and generation) and international literature on contemporary Chinese youth. The quality of the chapters are uneven. Whereas most of them offer solid empirical findings, (parts of) chapters two and 16 appear rather impressionistic. Some parts of the book are repetitive. Relevant as it is, chapter 12 is not directly about Chinese youth. Besides, a general conclusion chapter and chapter abstracts would have helped the reader (although the extensive introduction by Cheng Li is helpful). These weaknesses may at least partly be due to the fact that rather than a planned monograph, this book is a collection of works previously published in diverse venues and for particular audiences and purposes inside China.

Notwithstanding the "lacks," this book makes a valuable contribution to sociological studies of contemporary social change and youth, with particularly useful statistical details and insights about Chinese youth presented in a very accessible style. A more comprehensive account of inequalities among Chinese youth is rarely found in previous books published in English. This book will be of great value to anyone interested in present-day China and its youth, and more broadly, social transformation and inequality.

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If you were to read just a handful of ethnographic books about contemporary China, Zachary Howlett's book *Meritocracy and Its Discontents: Anxiety and the National College Entrance Exam in China* could in my opinion very well be one of them. By offering a window into the black box of the Chinese National College Entrance Exams (*gaokao*), the book provides deep insight into both the inherent unfairness