

Infrastructural Urbanism in Contemporary China

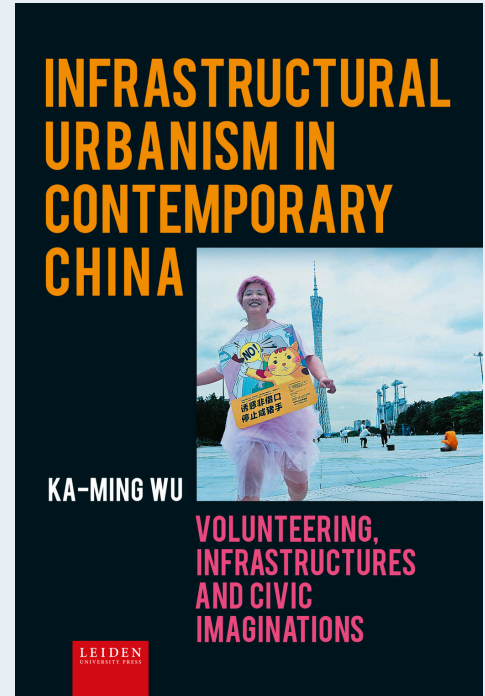
Volunteering, Infrastructures and Civic Imaginations
by Ka-ming Wu

This book examines how Chinese citizens negotiate their everyday experiences with urban spaces, improved city infrastructure, and an increasingly tight surveillance regime through volunteering. It asks how citizens connect to city spaces where facilities for transit, culture, and leisure have been substantially upgraded. Drawing on extensive research, the author investigates how citizens conduct volunteer activities that not only promote party-state campaigns and engage with new urban spaces and services, but also experiment with political, social, and cultural rights, including advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and promoting unofficial interpretations of national history.

The book argues that volunteering has become an urban practice through which citizens navigate existing hierarchies of urban and rural status, gender, age, and ability, while contesting top-down, mega-event-driven urbanization. It situates Chinese everyday urbanism within the context of China's hosting of multiple international events, its expanding public and digital infrastructures, heightened party-state control, and burgeoning digital activism. The book contributes to the infrastructural turn in urban anthropology and the field of China studies, offering a new understanding of urban rights and public access in contemporary China.

Bibliography

Ka-ming Wu is Associate Professor in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is a cultural anthropologist of contemporary China, and her work is interdisciplinary in approach at the intersection of Cultural Studies, Anthropology and China Studies. Ka-ming's first monograph is *Reinventing Chinese Tradition: The Cultural Politics of Late Socialism* (UIP 2015). Her second book *Feiping Shenghuo: Lajichang De Jingji, Shequn Yu Kongjian* (CUHK 2016) (*Living with Waste: Economies, Communities and Spaces of Waste Collectors in China*) discusses the socio-cultural impacts of waste. Ka-ming's research and scholarship have developed in concomitance with the field of environmental humanities, with waste studies and critical urban studies as the major pillars.



1 May 2026
175 pages
Hardback
Price €108.00

ISBN Print: 9789087285098
ISBN ePUB: 9789400605749
ISBN ePDF: 9789400605756

Keywords

Civic Imaginations, Contemporary China,
Everyday Urbanism, Mega-events, Urban
Infrastructure, Volunteering