Of quality, harmony, and community: Civilization and the middle class in urban China.

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This article discusses the rhetoric and practices of China's middle-class "community building" (shequ jianshe, as the campaign to reorganize urban residential communities that started in the late 1990s is called), and the role of suzhi (quality) in building models of "harmonious" (hexie) coexistence through new forms of community governance. By investigating the official discourse on community and harmony and the self-representation of middle-class community activists, I will argue that assumptions about middle-class suzhi are essential to three governmental objectives associated with the new forms of community governance: (1) the making of new subjects who are autonomous enough to choose what to consume (and therefore stimulate the market) but also responsible enough not to challenge social order; (2) the creation of subjects who will govern themselves at the level of their residential communities without the need for government intervention; and (3) the benchmarking of social aspirations and behaviors, with the creation of models for individual self-improvement. This article is part of a larger project on community building in urban China and is based on materials and interviews collected over three years in Beijing, Chengdu, and Shenyang.
Cultivating Citizens: Suzhi (Quality) Discourse in the PRC

Suzhi on the Move: Body, Place, and Power

The Corporeal Politics of Quality (Suzhi)

Suzhi, the Body, and the Fortunes of Technoscientific Reasoning in Contemporary China

class

middle

china

community