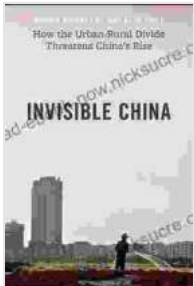


# How the Urban-Rural Divide Threatens China's Rise



## Invisible China: How the Urban-Rural Divide Threatens China's Rise by Robert D. Atkinson

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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China's rapid urbanization over the past four decades has been a major driver of economic growth, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and transforming the country into a global economic powerhouse.

However, this urbanization process has also exacerbated the urban-rural divide, a significant social and economic gap between China's urban and rural areas. This divide poses a threat to China's continued rise, as it can lead to social inequality, social unrest, and environmental degradation.

### Causes of the Urban-Rural Divide

The urban-rural divide in China is caused by a number of factors, including:

- **Economic disparities:** Urban areas in China are much wealthier than rural areas. This is due to a number of factors, including the concentration of industry and commerce in urban areas, the higher levels of education and skills in urban areas, and the greater access to capital and technology in urban areas.
- **Social inequality:** The urban-rural divide is also reflected in social inequality. Urban residents have access to better healthcare, education, and housing than rural residents. They also have more opportunities for social mobility and career advancement.
- **Migration:** The urban-rural divide is also exacerbated by migration. Millions of rural residents have migrated to urban areas in search of work and a better life. However, many of these migrants are not able to fully integrate into urban society. They often face discrimination and exploitation, and they may not have access to the same social services as urban residents.
- **Hukou system:** The hukou system is a household registration system that restricts the movement of people between rural and urban areas. This system makes it difficult for rural residents to move to urban areas, even if they have found work there. It also limits their access to social services in urban areas.

## **Consequences of the Urban-Rural Divide**

The urban-rural divide in China has a number of negative consequences, including:

- **Social inequality:** The urban-rural divide is a major source of social inequality in China. It leads to disparities in income, education,

healthcare, and social mobility between urban and rural residents.

- **Social unrest:** The urban-rural divide can also lead to social unrest. Rural residents who feel that they are being left behind may become frustrated and angry, and they may engage in protests or other forms of resistance.
- **Environmental degradation:** The urban-rural divide can also lead to environmental degradation. Urban areas in China are often more polluted than rural areas, and they also consume more resources. This can lead to air and water pollution, soil erosion, and other environmental problems.

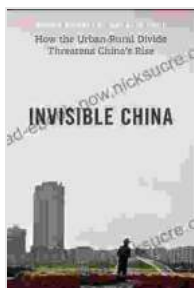
## **Policy Options to Address the Urban-Rural Divide**

There are a number of policy options that the Chinese government can implement to address the urban-rural divide, including:

- **Reducing economic disparities:** The government can reduce economic disparities between urban and rural areas by investing in rural infrastructure, providing subsidies to rural businesses, and encouraging the development of rural industries.
- **Improving social services in rural areas:** The government can improve social services in rural areas by investing in healthcare, education, and housing. It can also make it easier for rural residents to access social services in urban areas.
- **Reforming the hukou system:** The government can reform the hukou system to make it easier for rural residents to move to urban areas. It can also provide financial assistance to rural migrants who move to urban areas.

- **Promoting social mobility:** The government can promote social mobility by providing scholarships to rural students, supporting vocational training programs, and encouraging employers to hire rural workers.
- **Protecting the environment:** The government can protect the environment by investing in renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency, and reducing pollution. It can also encourage urban residents to reduce their consumption of resources.

The urban-rural divide in China is a major challenge that the country must address in order to continue its rise. The government is taking steps to address this challenge, but more needs to be done. By investing in rural areas, improving social services, and reforming the hukou system, the government can help to reduce the urban-rural divide and create a more prosperous and equitable society for all Chinese citizens.



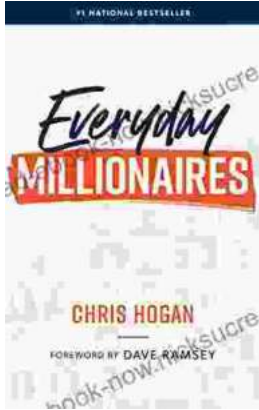
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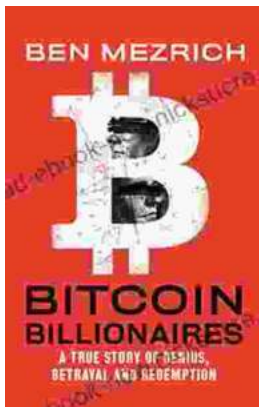
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