CONTENTS

List of Figures page ix
List of Tables x
Acknowledgments xi
List of Abbreviations xiii

1 Introduction 1
A New Theoretical Approach to Court Reform in China 5
Chapter Summaries 9
Conclusion 11

2 An Ecological Theory of Court Reform in Urban China 12
The Central Puzzle and Extant Theoretical Explanations 14
Court Change in Urban China through the Lens of Ecology 18
Conceptualizing and Measuring the Outcome
Variable: Personal Judicial Autonomy 33
Case Studies: The Interrelated Spatial and Temporal
Aspects of Courts in Urban China 38
Conclusion 45

3 The Judicial Cadre Evaluation System: Foundational
Institutional Incentives Undergirded by “Intra-state
Legibility” 48
The Emergence of Unified Judicial Performance
Evaluation, 1980–2014 52
The Boundary between Boss and Worker: The Collective
Nature of Court Leader Performance Evaluation
in China Prior to the 2014–2016 Judicial Reforms 55
Quantified Assessment of Ordinary Judges
and the Salience of Intrastate Legibility 60
Intrastate Legibility Supplants Formal Rewards
and Punishments 64
Conclusion 67

vii
## Table of Contents

### 4 High-End Demand for Legal Services and Local Pressure to Professionalize the Judiciary  
The First Two Decades of the Post-Mao Legal Profession in China: From State Legal Worker to “Unhooked” Private Counsel (1979–2000)  
The Emergence of Localized Markets for Private Legal Services (2000–present)  
Local Law Market Revenues and Characteristics  
The Suitability of Judges for Law Firm Careers in Urban China  
Conclusion

### 5 Expansions in Competitive Promotion and the Implications for Judicial Autonomy  
Changes to Judicial Selection and Promotion Before and After 1992  
The Effects of High-End Demand on Judicial Selection and Promotion: Case Study Comparison  
Transparency Rankings: Case Study Comparison (2012–2013)  
Autonomy Reflected in Published Judicial Opinions (2006–2011): Case Study Comparison  
Conclusion

### 6 Court Personnel, Bureaucratic Specialization, and the Limits of Top-Down Theory  
Personnel Policy and the Origins of the PRC Court System  
Case Studies on Bureaucratic Specialization in Local Courts  
Conclusion

### 7 Conclusion  
Historical Perspectives, Post-2016 Realities, and the Limits of This Study  
Building a Research Agenda  
Lessons for Authoritarian Judiciaries  
Conclusion

### Appendix

### References

### Index