

State capacity reads, YIMBY housing framing, and technical CEOs coding again

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Today’s strongest organic picks cluster around “how systems work” and building: Balaji shares a book on China’s public-sector mechanics and points to Tyler Cowen’s Singapore essay, while Garry Tan recommends a YIMBY framing piece and an X article about technical CEOs coding again in the AI era.

Most compelling recommendation (deepest “how systems work” lens)

***How China Works: An Introduction to Development* (book)**

- **Title:** *How China Works: An Introduction to Development* ¹
- **Content type:** Book ²
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the source excerpt
- **Link/URL:** <https://www.amazon.com/How-China-Works-Introduction-Development/dp/9819700795> ³
- **Who recommended it:** Balaji Srinivasan (@balajis) ⁴
- **Key takeaway (as shared):** Despite a “boring cover,” Balaji says it’s “quite well written” and “explains how China’s numerically-oriented public sector actually works.” ⁵
- **Why it matters:** It’s positioned as a practical guide to understanding a real-world governance and administration model—focused on *how the machinery operates*, not just high-level narratives. ⁶

¹ post by @balajis

² post by @balajis

³ post by @balajis

⁴ post by @balajis

⁵ post by @balajis

⁶ post by @balajis

Governance models & “startup societies” framing

Tyler Cowen — “Why is Singapore No Longer Cool?” (blog post)

- **Title:** “Why is Singapore No Longer Cool?” ⁷
- **Content type:** Blog post ⁸
- **Author/creator:** Tyler Cowen ⁹
- **Link/URL:** <https://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2026/02/why-is-singapore-no-longer-cool.html> ¹⁰
- **Who recommended it:** Balaji Srinivasan (@balajis) ¹¹
- **Key takeaway (as shared):** Balaji says Cowen’s post is “worth reading,” but he “draw[s] very much the opposite conclusions,” arguing Singapore’s style is becoming “aspirational,” describing it as “highly tolerant yet legally strict,” “internationalist and capitalist,” “public services with low taxes,” and “modern and high-tech,” among other traits. ¹²¹³
- **Why it matters:** Balaji uses the post as a springboard to argue for building “many more startup societies like Singapore, Dubai, El Salvador, and Starbase.” ¹⁴

“We need many more startup societies like Singapore, Dubai, El Salvador, and Starbase.” ¹⁵

Housing & development: a reframing for “luxury” supply

Noah Smith (Noahpinion) — “Yuppie Fishtanks: YIMBYism explained” (blog post)

- **Title:** “Yuppie Fishtanks: YIMBYism explained” ¹⁶
- **Content type:** Blog post ¹⁷
- **Author/creator:** Noah Smith (Noahpinion) (as indicated by the source link/domain) ¹⁸
- **Link/URL:** <https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/yuppie-fishtanks-yimbyism-explained> ¹⁹

⁷ post by @balajis

⁸ post by @balajis

⁹ post by @balajis

¹⁰ post by @balajis

¹¹ post by @balajis

¹² post by @balajis

¹³ post by @balajis

¹⁴ post by @balajis

¹⁵ post by @balajis

¹⁶ post by @garrytan

¹⁷ post by @garrytan

¹⁸ post by @garrytan

¹⁹ post by @garrytan

- **Who recommended it:** Garry Tan (@garrytan) ²⁰²¹
 - **Key takeaway (as shared):** Tan promotes building more “yuppie fish tanks,” arguing the label “luxury housing” is used as a “slur,” and links this post as the explainer for that framing. ²²²³
 - **Why it matters:** It’s a concrete rhetorical/mental model for pro-building advocates: treat high-end new housing as part of increasing overall supply, rather than dismissing it by category label. (This is the frame Tan is endorsing via the post.) ²⁴²⁵
- “Luxury housing is a slur” ²⁶

Building with AI: executives “coding again”

X article (title not specified) — shared via X Articles (article)

- **Title:** Not specified in the source excerpt
- **Content type:** X article ²⁷
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the source excerpt
- **Link/URL:** <http://x.com/i/article/2024601345890930688> ²⁸
- **Who recommended it:** Garry Tan (@garrytan) ²⁹
- **Key takeaway (as shared):** Tan says “About 1/3 of the top technical CEOs are completely AGI pilled by coding again,” adds “I am one of them,” and calls it “Totally exhilarating to be back shipping new products and software again,” recommending the article in that context. ³⁰³¹
- **Why it matters:** It’s a signal that some technical leaders are treating hands-on coding—apparently enabled by current AI tools—as a renewed advantage for shipping. ³²

“About 1/3 of the top technical CEOs are completely AGI pilled by coding again. I am one of them. Highly recommend.” ³³

²⁰ post by @garrytan
²¹ post by @garrytan
²² post by @garrytan
²³ post by @garrytan
²⁴ post by @garrytan
²⁵ post by @garrytan
²⁶ post by @garrytan
²⁷ post by @howietl
²⁸ post by @howietl
²⁹ post by @garrytan
³⁰ post by @garrytan
³¹ post by @howietl
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Sources

1. post by @balajis
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