Locating China explores the political economy of space, place and popular culture in contemporary China. This multidisciplinary volume articulates the relations of local culture and consumer culture to the production of diverse new spatial projects engaged by the local “agents.” China’s continuing drive toward urbanization gave rise to not only new cultural imaginaries but also new space and places, and new forms of spatial practices, thus destabilizing the older concepts of the “local” and “locality.”

The international group of scholars incorporate theoretical inquiries of space with grounded empirical work on multiple locales throughout China. Whether the point of interest is village discotheques or tourist villas in Guizhou, teahouses in Hainan or luxury apartments and architectural extravaganzas in Shenzhen, the contributors argue that local places and local cultural practices are not constrained within the local scale. This therefore raises the question – how does meaning transfer between different scales, the local, the national, and the global, as well as the urban and rural?

From the analysis of SARS and Beijing’s vision of rescaling the country’s administrative space, to the discussion of the pornographic city, tabloid papers and other pop cultural forms, this volume delivers ethnographic observations and theoretical speculations essential to our understanding of the link between spatial thinking and the production of consumer culture in China.

Contributors include Helen F. Siu, Peter Perdue, Carolyn Cartier, Tim Oakes, Louisa Schein, Tani E. Barlow, Hans Hendrischke, Wanning Sun, Feng Chongyi, and Jing Wang.

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1 The Democratisation of China
   *Baogang He*

2 Beyond Beijing
   *Dali Yang*

3 China’s Enterprise Reform
   Changing state/society relations after Mao
   *You Ji*

4 Industrial Change in China
   Economic restructuring and conflicting interests
   *Kate Hannan*

5 The Entrepreneurial State in China
   Real estate and commerce departments in reform era Tianjin
   *Jane Duckett*

6 Tourism and Modernity in China
   *Tim Oakes*

7 Cities in Post Mao China
   Recipes for economic development in the reform era
   *Jae Ho Chung*

8 China’s Spatial Economic Development
   Regional transformation in the Lower Yangzi Delta
   *Andrew M. Marton*

9 Regional Development in China
   States, globalization and inequality
   *Yehua Dennis Wei*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10      | Grassroots Charisma | Four local leaders in China  
*Stephan Feuchtwang and Wang Mingming* |
| 11      | The Chinese Legal System | Globalization and local legal culture  
*Pitman B. Potter* |
| 12      | Transforming Rural China | How local institutions shape property rights in China  
*Chi-Jou Jay Chen* |
| 13      | Negotiating Ethnicity in China | Citizenship as a response to the state  
*Chih-yu Shih* |
| 14      | Manager Empowerment in China | Political implications of rural industrialisation in the reform era  
*Ray Yep* |
| 15      | Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China | The search for national identity under reform  
*Yingjie Guo* |
| 16      | Elite Dualism and Leadership Selection in China |  
*Xiaowei Zang* |
| 17      | Chinese Intellectuals Between State and Market |  
*Edward Gu and Merle Goldman* |
| 18      | China, Sex and Prostitution |  
*Elaine Jeffreys* |
| 19      | The Development of China’s Stockmarket, 1984–2002 | Equity politics and market institutions  
*Stephen Green* |
| 20      | China’s Rational Entrepreneurs | The development of the new private business sector  
*Barbara Krug* |
| 21      | China’s Scientific Elite |  
*Cong Cao* |
| 22      | Locating China |  
*Jing Wang* |
Locating China
Space, place, and popular culture

Edited by Jing Wang
Contents

List of illustrations ix
List of contributors x
Acknowledgements xii

Introduction: The politics and production of scales in China: how does geography matter to studies of local, popular culture? 1

1 Land of living fossils: scaling cultural prestige in China’s periphery 31

TIm Oakes

2 Regional formations and transnational urbanism in south China 52

CaroLyN carTieR

3 The cultural landscape of luxury housing in south China: a regional history 72

HeLen F. siu

4 Identifying China’s Northwest, for nation and empire 94

PeTer pErDue

5 Popularization and localization: a local tabloid newspaper market in transition 115

HaNs HendRischke

6 From barrooms to teahouses: commercial nightlife in Hainan since 1988 133

FeNg cHon gyi
viii  Contents

7 Ethnoconsumerism as cultural production?: making space for Miao style  150
   LOUISA SCHEIN

8 Anhui baomu in Shanghai: Gender, class, and a sense of place  171
   WANNING SUN

9 The pornographic city  190
   TANI E. BARLOW

Bibliography  210
Index  232
List of illustrations

Figures
3.1 The CITIC Tower at the new Guangzhou train station 76
3.2 Lan Mei Lou. Unfinished building in the Huiyang area, left from the period of fiscal tightening in the mid-1990s 81
9.1 Knowing woman 193
9.2 Building a community (with eugenic baby) 193

Tables
5.1 Tabloid newspapers in Guangxi in 2001 120
5.2 Readership characteristics of the South Country Morning Post 127
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Contributors  xi

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