



Consumers and Individuals in China: Standing Out, Fitting In (Chinese Worlds)

Michael B. Griffiths

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Breaking new ground in the study of Chinese urban society, this book applies critical discourse analysis to ethnographic data gathered in Anshan, a third-tier city and market in northeast China. The book confronts the – still widespread – notion that Chinese consumers are not "real" individuals, and in doing so represents an ambitious attempt to give a new twist to the structure versus agency debates in social theory. To this end, Michael B. Griffiths shows how claims to virtues such as authenticity, knowledge, civility, sociable character, moral propriety and self-cultivation emerge from and give shape to social interaction. Data material for this path-breaking analysis is drawn from informants as diverse as consumerist youths, dissident intellectuals, enterprising farmers, retired Party cadres, the rural migrant staff of an inner-city restaurant, the urban families dependent on a machine-repair workshop, and a range of white-collar professionals.

Consumers and Individuals in China: Standing out, fitting in, will appeal to sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural studies scholars, China Studies generalists, and professionals working at the intersection of culture and business in China. The vivid descriptions of living and doing fieldwork in China also mean that those travelling there will find the book stimulating and useful

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