



## The Consumer Revolution in Urban China (Studies on China)

*From University of California Press*

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After decades of egalitarian, restricted consumption, residents of China's cities are surrounded by a level of material comfort and commercial hype unimaginable just ten years ago. In this first in-depth treatment of the consumer revolution in China, fourteen leading scholars of Chinese culture and society explore the interpersonal consequences of rapid commercialization.

In the early 1980s, Beijing's communist leadership advocated decollectivization, foreign trade, and private entrepreneurship to jump-start a stagnant economy, while explicitly rejecting any notion that economic reforms would promote political change. However, by the early 1990s the reforms in the marketplace not only produced double-digit growth but also enabled ordinary citizens to nurture dreams and social networks that challenged official discourse and conventions through millions of daily commercial transactions. Using participant observation, contributors to this book describe and analyze a wide range of these changing consumer practices: luxury housing, white wedding gowns, greeting cards, McDonald's, discos, premium cigarettes, bowling, and more.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"The definite book on China's consumer revolution. The volume examines how, during the past decade of market reform, China's growing private consumerism is replacing the Maoist egalitarian society oriented toward goods provided publicly or in the workplace." --Choice

### From the Back Cover

After decades of egalitarian, restricted consumption, the residents of China's cities are today surrounded by material comforts and awash in a level of commercial hype that was totally unimaginable just ten years ago. In this first in-depth treatment of the consumer revolution in China, fourteen leading scholars of Chinese culture and society explore the interpersonal consequences of rapid commercialization.

In the early 1980s Beijing's communist leadership advocated decollectivization, foreign trade, and private entrepreneurship to jump-start a stagnant economy. It explicitly rejected any notion that economic reforms would lead to political change, but by the early 1990s its program had not only produced double-digit growth but also enabled ordinary citizens to nurture dreams and social networks that challenged official monopolies of power. Using participant observation, the authors in this book describe and analyze a wide range of these changing consumer practices, including luxury housing, white wedding gowns, greeting cards, McDonald's, discos, premium cigarettes, and bowling.

Capitalism has brought urban Chinese both a higher material standard of living and new freedoms to create a private life beyond the control of the state. This important book offers rare insights into the world's largest marketplace.

### About the Author

**Deborah S. Davis**, Professor of Sociology at Yale University, is the author of *Long Lives: Chinese Elderly and the Communist Revolution* (1991) and coeditor of *Chinese Society on the Eve of Tiananmen* (1990), *Chinese Families in the Post-Mao Era* (California, 1993), and *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (1995).

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