



# Governing Educational Desire: Culture, Politics, and Schooling in China

*Andrew B. Kipnis*

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Parents in China greatly value higher education for their children, but the intensity and effects of their desire to achieve this goal have largely gone unexamined—until now. *Governing Educational Desire* explores the cultural, political, and economic origins of Chinese desire for a college education as well as its vast consequences, which include household and national economic priorities, birthrates, ethnic relations, and patterns of governance.

Where does this desire come from? Andrew B. Kipnis approaches this question in four different ways. First, he investigates the role of local context by focusing on family and community dynamics in one Chinese county, Zouping. Then, he widens his scope to examine the provincial and national governmental policies that affect educational desire. Next, he explores how contemporary governing practices were shaped by the Confucian examination system, uncovering the historical forces at work in the present. Finally, he looks for the universal in the local, considering the ways aspects of educational desire in Zouping spread throughout China and beyond. In doing so, Kipnis provides not only an illuminating analysis of education in China but also a thought-provoking reflection on what educational desire can tell us about the relationship between culture and government.

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