



The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India

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By zooming in on urban localities in India and by unpacking the 'meaning of the local' for those who live in them, the ten papers in this volume redress a recurrent asymmetry in contemporary debates about globalisation. In much literature, the global is associated with transnationalism, dynamism and activity, and the local with static identities and history.

Focusing on a range of locales in India's metropolitan areas and provincial small towns, the contributions move beyond the assertion that space is socially constructed to explore the ways in which social and political relations are themselves spatially and historically contingent. Using detailed ethnography, the authors highlight the vitality of place-making in the lives of urban dwellers and the centrality of a 'politics of place' in the production of power, difference and inequality. The volume illustrates how urban spaces are increasingly interconnected through wider social and spatial processes, while local boundaries and group-based identities are at the same time reconstructed, and often even consolidated, through the use of 'traditional' idioms and localised practices.

All contributions relate detailed case studies of everyday activities to a range of contemporary debates that highlight various spatial aspects of cultural identities, economic restructuring and political processes in India. The volume provides an interdisciplinary perspective on urban life in rapidly changing political and economic environments. It offers a contribution to policy-orientated debates on urban livelihoods and urban planning as well as a wealth of ethnographic material for those interested in the spatial dimensions of urban life in India.

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The Meaning of the Local: Politics of Place in Urban India From UCL Press Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5806373 in Books
- Published on: 2006-12-17
- Released on: 2011-02-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .57" w x 6.14" l, .79 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 250 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Geert De Neve is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Sussex, UK. He has a specific interest in issues of anthropology and globalisation, as well as a more general interest in processes of migration, modernity and social transformation.

Henrike Donner is Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the London School of Economics, UK. She is an urban anthropologist and has worked extensively in Calcutta, India. Her research interests are focused on gender and kinship, education, reproductive change, middle-class lifestyles, urban space and politics.

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