

# Reflecting on the Paradox of Globalisation: China's Search for Cultural Identity and Coherence

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*China's intellectuals have responded to the cultural impact of globalisation in various ways. Some have welcomed it, regarding it as the harbinger of cultural changes that will modernise China and lead to democratic reform. Many more have expressed hostility and alarm, fearing increased individualism and consumerism. China's leaders have nevertheless determined to further expose the country to global forces, confident that the Chinese state is sufficiently robust to counter threats to its sovereignty in the cultural realm. However, the paradoxical tendencies of globalisation — cultural homogenisation and cultural fragmentation — will constitute a significant challenge to the leadership in defining and guarding what it understands 'Chinese' culture to be.*

According to a number of Western theorists, the cultural effects of globalisation have been considerable.<sup>1</sup> They argue that in developing countries like China, which have over recent decades been increasingly subject to the economic, political and cultural influence of the developed capitalist nations, ways of living and producing have altered profoundly, and with this has come

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a changed consciousness of the world.<sup>2</sup> No longer do the mental horizons that define the geographical limits of the individual's conscious existence necessarily terminate at the boundaries of the local or national, but they can now extend outwards to potentially encompass the entire globe. There has consequently been a shift to a spatial vision in which one's geographical place in the world is linked to other places, both near and far, via the mediation of the modern technologies of communication. It has now become possible to imagine the world as a whole; this in turn has suggested the possibility of being part of the world, interacting with it, being mobile in it, learning about it and, importantly, copying it. The lifestyle characteristic of advanced Western capitalist societies, premised on individualism, consumerism and affluence, appears close at hand, desirable and seemingly attainable.<sup>3</sup>

Globalisation thus suggests the possibility of not only an expanded consciousness of the world, but a transformation of the way people think about the world and the possibility of being part of it. This obviously has the potential to alter profoundly the way in which people identify themselves, as local and national cultures that had previously constituted the major source of identity are eroded by the influence of an increasingly globalised culture.<sup>4</sup> But will globalisation inevitably lead to the erosion and eventual disappearance of local and national cultures, and their substitution by a global culture originating in the cultures of Western capitalist nations? Moreover, does the US' global political and economic dominance indicate that this emerging global culture is essentially an American culture, whose values and practices produce an Americanising effect in cultures quite alien and possibly hostile to it? Through "opening wide" to the West, has China made possible the conditions for the importation of a Western or American culture that will severely weaken the integrity of its culture? And what will be the effect of this process on the Chinese Communist Party's still extant intention to

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<sup>1</sup> One of the most outspoken advocates of this position has been Roland Robertson, *Globalisation and Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1992). For a critical commentary, see Arif Dirlik, "Formations of Globality and Radical Politics", *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies* 21, no. 4 (1999): 322–30.

<sup>2</sup> Roland Axtmann, "Globalization and the Democratic Nation-state: Twelve Theses", <<http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/1995%5Caxtm.pdf>> [9 Aug. 2005].

<sup>3</sup> Leslie Sklair, *Sociology of the Global System* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1995); David Howes, ed., *Cross Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

create a socialist future, a future wildly at odds with the values of an emerging global culture based on the values of advanced capitalism?<sup>5</sup>

These are questions that have exercised the minds of the theorists and, to a lesser extent, the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The possibility of the erosion of “Chinese” cultural values and their at least partial substitution by the Americanised values of Western capitalism have alarmed those within the Party who fear for the integrity of China’s culture or its commitment to socialism, or both. But how real is the threat posed to China’s culture by a global culture dominated by American values?<sup>6</sup> The ultimate effect of globalisation, according to one theme in Western globalisation literature, will be the erosion of cultures and their eventual replacement by a globally homogenised culture.<sup>7</sup> Cultural differences that distinguish regions, nations and localities will decline or be extinguished, and the world will progressively become a unified cultural entity. In this scenario, “China” would become merely a geographical entity, and not a signifier of a culture or cultural tradition. For the notion of cultural identity, of deriving one’s image of oneself and one’s position in the world from a particular cultural community linked to a particular location, would cease to have any significance under the unremitting impact of culturally uniform images and values dispersed through global media outlets. As Hall suggests, in a globalised condition of modernity, one’s perceptions of oneself and the world would be thoroughly penetrated and shaped by quite distant social influences.<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, the potential for the “Coca-colonisation” or “McDonaldisation” of China’s culture clearly exists.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Jiang Zemin, “Hold High the Great Banner of Deng Xiaoping Theory”, *Beijing Review* (6–12 Oct. 1997): 17, 23.

<sup>6</sup> For a general discussion of this issue, see Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge 1996).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity”, in *Modernity and its Future*, ed. Stuart Hall, David Held and Tony McGrew (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University, 1992), p. 302.

<sup>9</sup> See George Ritzer, *The McDonaldisation of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2000, revised ed.). For a critical discussion of the Chinese context, see Beverly Hooper, “Globalisation and Resistance in Post-Mao China: The Case of Foreign Consumer Products”, *Asian Studies Review* 24, no. 4 (Dec. 2000): 439–70.

Other scholars have challenged this view, pointing out that the process of cultural homogenisation implied by globalisation is exceedingly complex, and that it is not at all obvious that this process will result in a uniform global culture premised on the values of advanced capitalism.<sup>10</sup> There could well be countervailing forces and effects: cultural fragmentation, the creation of hybridised cultures, the recrudescence of previously declining cultures, and even cultural resistance.<sup>11</sup> One aspect of this complexity is its challenge to conventional accounts of culture, which have frequently presumed the possibility of a *national* culture.<sup>12</sup> From this perspective, there is a “Chinese” culture aligned with the Chinese nation, and it is this that is now under threat from a rampant and intrusive globalising culture. However, some Western theorists have challenged this alignment of nation and culture, preferring to view culture as attached to particular locations, or “places” as Hall describes them, or to sub-national communities.<sup>13</sup> So-called “national” cultures are very likely to be constructed and maintained by national governments in the attempt to instil in their often culturally diverse populations a unified national consciousness that will deliver political unity and loyalty to the state.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, these fragile politically constructed national cultures may well be more subject to the erosive effects of globalisation than cultures attached to particular locations and communities, where the linkage of place and culture remains strong. The impact of globalisation is likely to be different at these different levels.

The view that there is a “Chinese” national culture is prevalent in contemporary Chinese discourse on globalisation and its cultural effects, and

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<sup>10</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* (Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Robertson, *Globalisation and Social Theory*, p. 12; Chris Barker, *Television, Globalisation and Cultural Identities* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Robertson has pointed out that it is a mistake to “carry into the study of globalisation the kind of view of culture that we inherit from the conventional analysis of the national society”, *Globalisation and Social Theory*, p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity”, pp. 301–2. For a sophisticated analysis of the concept of “place” in the context of globalisation, see Arif Dirlik, “Place-based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place”, in *Places and Politics in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Roxann Prazniak and Arif Dirlik (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp. 15–52.

<sup>14</sup> See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 27–47.

it is this culture that is considered under threat from the cultural impact of globalisation; there is little concern at the national level for globalisation's erosion of China's minority cultures.<sup>15</sup> For China's leaders and many Chinese scholars and CCP theorists, defence of China's cultural integrity has become an article of faith. While they recognise that opening to the outside world has allowed entry to cultural forms and practices possessing the potential to erode and dilute Chinese culture, they do not accept that this necessarily signifies the abandonment of the cultural field to the unregulated ravages of cultural globalisation; they do not accept that engagement with globalisation, particularly economic globalisation, betokens acceptance of the inevitability of the Westernisation or Americanisation of China. For in the face of the challenge posed to China's culture by globalisation stands the Chinese nation-state, which retains, they presume, the capacity and determination to defend its sovereignty, whether this be in the economic, political or cultural realms. Defence of China's culture thus relies on an assumption of the continuing significance of the nation-state in the era of globalisation. The nation-state remains the vital building block of the world political system, and nation-states, individually and in concert, have the capacity and duty to regulate and manage globalisation in the interests of nation-states and their national populations. This extends to defence of national cultures, for there remains, and should continue to be so, a high degree of alignment between the nation, as a cultural tradition, and the ensemble of political institutions of the state. Moreover, the state possesses the capacity to define and regulate the attributes that characterise the nation's culture, and to proscribe cultural forms and practices that seriously threaten it. The state can also act to deploy the national culture to advance the state's interests, whether ideologically, politically or commercially.

Other Chinese scholars and Party theorists are not convinced. As we will observe, there is considerable alarm that China's deepening embrace of globalisation has brought with it a very real threat to the integrity of China's culture, even to

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<sup>15</sup> And why should there be if, as Jiang Zemin asserts, "China's 56 ethnic groups breathe the same air, share the same fate and join their hearts as one, evolving a socialist relationship among all ethnic groups featuring equality, unity and mutual aid?" Jiang Zemin, "Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua" (Speech at Grand Gathering Marking the Eightieth Anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party), *People's Daily*, 2 July 2001, pp. 3–4. For discussion of the effect of globalisation on China's minorities, see Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation* (London: Routledge, 2003).

the point of describing it as a “cultural crisis”.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, there is recognition that the Chinese state is adopting an ambivalent role in its approach to culture within the context of globalisation. On the one hand, China’s leaders vociferously assert the need to defend China’s culture, for this is what defines the Chinese nation: the inevitable cultural influences flowing from globalisation cannot and will not be allowed by the Chinese state to extend to the erosion and perhaps fatal dilution of China’s culture, and its gradual substitution by a global culture dominated by Western capitalist values. On the other hand, China’s leaders have asserted their intention to further open China to the influence of globalisation, and to continue reform in the cultural area, involving both expansion of the cultural market in China and increased access to Chinese audiences by global media. In other words, they advocate the creation of a context in which the state by definition will have a considerably reduced capacity to regulate and control the cultural impact of globalisation. The tension between these two positions cannot readily be reconciled. This has led to a serious dilemma for Party theorists and Chinese scholars who by and large support the general thrust of economic reform with its mantra of openness, but who regard with suspicion and alarm its apparently negative cultural consequences.

It is this tension in contemporary Chinese discourse on globalisation and its cultural effects that is the subject of this paper, and it explores the issue by firstly providing a review of the positions articulated by Chinese scholars and CCP theorists. It will become clear that, while there is no unanimity, there does exist considerable disquiet over the challenge to China’s culture indicated by globalisation’s constantly increasing incursion into China’s economic and cultural realms. The second section of the paper details the Chinese leaders’ perceptions of globalisation’s impact on China’s culture, and highlights their steadfast belief that the Chinese nation-state retains the capacity to manage and control the cultural effects of globalisation. I suggest that this position is in conflict with their stated intention to expand and diversify China’s cultural market, including the encouragement of China’s involvement in regional and global cultural markets,<sup>17</sup> for increased marketisation of China’s culture will result in the erosion of the Chinese nation-state’s capacity to regulate the cultural realm. There is thus a tension in the official position on culture, one that serves to underscore

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<sup>16</sup> Li Shenzhi, “Quanqiu hua yu Zhongguo wenhua” (Globalisation and Chinese Culture), *Chuantong wenhua yu xiandaihua* 4 (1994): 3–11.

<sup>17</sup> See Hu Jintao, “Zhongguo de fazhan, Yazhou de jiyu” (China’s Development, Asia’s Opportunity), *People’s Daily*, 25 Apr. 2004.

the concerns raised by some Chinese scholars and Party theorists that China is fostering those conditions that will result in what it fears most: the loss of its cultural identity through the Westernisation, and worse, Americanisation of its culture. In the final section of the paper, the author responds to these concerns by speculating on the possibility that the cultural effects of globalisation in China and the commodification of its culture do not necessarily signal the submersion of China's culture(s) by a uniform global culture dominated by American culture and values; for parallel to the homogenising tendency of global culture runs a tendency to increased cultural fragmentation as the market economy becomes increasingly diversified and segmented, thus creating "places" within which individualised and even idiosyncratic cultural responses may emerge. It is thus probable that the Chinese state will partially and unwittingly achieve its objective of avoiding the complete "Americanisation" of China's culture. But the outcome will almost certainly not be what it desires.

## **Globalisation and Culture: The View of China's Intellectuals**

There is a vast and rapidly growing body of literature on globalisation in China, one largely unknown to Western theorists of globalisation. While much of this literature is derivative of the theoretical concerns of Western globalisation literature, it is nevertheless significant for it applies those concerns to the attempted resolution of the particular dilemmas and paradoxes occasioned by China's embrace of globalisation, particularly economic globalisation. Chinese intellectuals have grasped the concept of globalisation in the hope of insights into the causes and consequences of globalisation, and how China should respond to it. Reviewing this literature is challenging, for it is not only vast, it is characterised by theoretical and political diversity. There is no agreement, as one would expect. In the cultural realm, opinions range from hostility to globalisation and its cultural effects, to a desire for further cultural transformation and "modernisation" of China's culture under the influence of the West. Between these positions is a perspective that has become dominant through its alignment with official Party policy. This perspective endorses China's engagement with globalisation, believing that the Chinese state can manage this process to the advantage of the Chinese nation, and that globalisation's potentially deleterious cultural effects can be limited through state intervention. Amongst the many scholars and Party theorists who share this latter perspective, there is a firm belief in the continuing capacity of the Chinese nation to determine its fate; its sovereignty is not jeopardised by globalisation, and in fact may be enhanced

by it. There thus exist within China's globalisation literature identifiable poles around which opinion and debate have coalesced, and this makes possible a representative reading of this literature.

What then do China's intellectuals think of the cultural changes that have accompanied China's embrace of globalisation, particularly economic globalisation? Those critical of globalisation and its capacity to radically transform China's culture are quick to point to the cultural upheavals that have occurred since 1978, when China commenced its policy of "opening to the outside" (*duiwai kaifang*). Liu Kang, a Chinese scholar now resident in the US, whose work has been influential in China and who is regarded as a representative of China's "New Left", has suggested that the impact of globalisation in China has not, in fact, resulted in an unproblematic shift to an homogenised global culture based on Western values, although there are obvious tendencies in that direction. He argues, rather, that the cultural scene in China since the early 1980s has become exceedingly complex.<sup>18</sup> There has been the obvious cultural shift of urban youth, which has absorbed and flaunts the materialistic and individualistic values and forms of expression of Western popular culture disseminated by global media outlets (a process Liu describes as "information colonialism").<sup>19</sup> Increased access to the internet has been particularly important in the creation of this new generation of urban youth, which expresses itself in an often self-parodying and slangy version of China's traditional and revolutionary culture. The new cyberspace culture of China's urban youth embraces sexual mores and depictions of an explicitness and licentiousness horrifying to the CCP and older Chinese, raised as they were on a far more sedate rendition of personal relationships. Yet, cyberspace culture is only one, albeit attention-grabbing, dimension of contemporary Chinese culture. Cultural themes from China's revolutionary past — captured in the phrase "culture of the masses" (*qunzhong wenyi*) — persist and have been incorporated into global cultural forms such as soap operas, and appeal to a very large audience (particularly peasants and older urban dwellers) still moved by the values and emotions of families enduring the rigours of the revolutionary period. At a more

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<sup>18</sup> Liu Kang, *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004); Liu Kang, *Quanqiuhua, minzuhua* (Making Globality, Making Nationality) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2002), pp. 3–72.

<sup>19</sup> For a critique of Liu Kang's concept of "information colonialism", see Hu Yanping, "Bu fazhan shi zuida de bu anquan: xinxi zhiminlun" (Not to Develop is the Greatest Insecurity: The Theory of Information Colonialism), Sohu, 2000 <<http://it.sohu.com/06/74/article207627406.shtml>> [15 June 2004].

rarefied level, avant-garde literature and postmodernism in art have challenged the previously Party-approved socialist realism.<sup>20</sup> There has emerged a kaleidoscopic and rapidly evolving cultural realm, in which a “riotous proliferation of cultural symbols”<sup>21</sup> has challenged the Party’s pronouncements on culture by generating multiple cultural and intellectual perspectives.<sup>22</sup> There are, Liu Kang concludes, vastly diverse and differentiated cultural markets and audiences in China. There remains, however, the insidious pressure to cultural uniformity implied by the increasing penetration of China’s cultural market by global media outlets.<sup>23</sup>

The scenario painted by Liu Kang of cultural fragmentation, erosion of cultural identity and heightened anomie, and of an emerging youth culture whose values are very much at odds with their parents’ and grandparents’ generations, does find a resonance amongst some Chinese intellectuals and Party theorists, alarmed at globalisation’s increasing erosion of China’s culture and tradition.<sup>24</sup> After all, it is Western states, they believe, that are behind the process of globalisation, and its main impulse comes from US-dominated institutions — the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF and economically powerful Transnational Corporations.<sup>25</sup> These are not neutral and benign institutions, for the rules of the game by which they operate have been determined by the US and other Western capitalist nations. Globalisation thus inevitably brings with it the Americanisation of cultures throughout the globe, and the weakening of the integrity of local and national

<sup>20</sup> For discussion of the impact of postmodernism on contemporary intellectual thought in China, see Wang Hui, “Contemporary Chinese Thought and the Question of Modernity”, *Social Text* 16, no. 2 (1998): 27–30.

<sup>21</sup> George T. Crane, “Imagining the Economic Nation: Globalisation in China”, *New Political Economy* 4, no. 2 (July 1999): 215–32.

<sup>22</sup> One Chinese commentator has argued that during the 1980s, China’s literature took “the liberation of personality as its main theme”, and considered a free economy and market as the “ideal environment” for this movement. Nan Fan, “Quanqiu hua yu xiangxiang de keneng” (Globalisation and the Possibility of Imagination), *People’s Daily*, 9 June 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Liu Kang, *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*.

<sup>24</sup> See Yu Keping, “Quanqiu hua: Zhongguo xuezhe de zheng lun” (Globalisation: The Debate between Chinese Scholars), *Xuexi shibao*, 11 Jan. 2002; also Yu Keping, “From the Discourse of ‘Sino-West’ to ‘Globalization’: Chinese Perspectives on Globalisation”, *Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition Working Paper Series*, Mar. 2004.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Wu Xingnan and Lin Shanwei, *Quanqiu hua yu weilai Zhongguo* (Globalisation and the China of the Future) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2002), pp. 217–55.

cultures.<sup>26</sup> Everyday life in countries like China is thus increasingly infused with manifestations of Western and particularly American values and practices.<sup>27</sup> As Tian Dewen laments, the lifestyle of Western materialism, and in particular American excessive consumerism, is becoming fashionable in China as a result of globalisation; and the values underpinning this lifestyle serve the interests of Western countries, and not those of developing countries like China. In areas as diverse as literature, the arts, publishing, lifestyles, institutions, values, academic studies, even science and technology, there has, Tian argues, been an increased presence of American values. Moreover, what is happening to China's culture is what is happening to cultures worldwide. There is a process of "global Americanisation" at work in the developed and developing countries alike. The process of global cultural homogenisation is insidious, and China cannot stand apart from it.<sup>28</sup> One Chinese scholar has bluntly stated that "[g]lobalisation means Americanisation and capitalist expansion. Its purpose is to eliminate socialism."<sup>29</sup>

Several Chinese scholars have directed their critique of globalisation's impact on China's culture at Chinese youth, who more so than other generations have absorbed and manifested the lifestyle characteristic of Western capitalist nations. The consequences have been dramatic. According to Liu Hezhong, Chinese youth have turned from idealism to pragmatism, from a belief in a single coherent value system to value pluralism, and have turned away from the collective ethos to individualism; they have also turned from dependency to independence, and there has been a change in their orientation from politics to economics. The consequence of this cultural turn on the part of China's youth is that there has

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, "Safeguard Our Culture", *China Daily*, 19 June 2001.

<sup>27</sup> "Ward off Cultural Hegemony", *China Daily*, 25 Dec. 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Tian Dewen, "Xifang wenhua baquan yu lengzhan hou de guojia guanxi" (Western Cultural Hegemony and Post-Cold War International Relations), in *Quanqiuhua: Xifanghua haishi Zhongguohua?* (Globalisation: Westernisation or Sinification?), ed. Yu Keping (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2002), pp. 143–59.

<sup>29</sup> Tang Renwu, "Jingji quanqiuhua de shizhi yu Zhongguo de duice" (The Nature of Globalisation and China's Countermeasures), in *Quanqiuhua: Xifanghua haishi Zhongguohua?* ed. Yu Keping, pp. 87–94. For similar sentiment, see Zhang Shibao, *Cong Xibua dao quanqiuhua* (From Westernisation to Globalisation) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2004), pp. 219–20; and Hong Liang, "Jingji quanqiuhua guancha" (An Investigation into Economic Globalisation) in *Quanqiuhua: Xifanghua haishi Zhongguohua?*, ed. Yu Keping, pp. 39–54.

been in their thinking and behaviour a weakening of “national concepts”. There has become prevalent amongst youth a materialism that constitutes a challenge to socialist idealism; and increasing individualism has led to a “drift away from traditional virtues”.<sup>30</sup>

Concern about the rapidly changing values of China's youth is widespread, and has prompted some Chinese intellectuals and Party theorists to call for increased vigilance and action on the part of the Chinese state to sustain and defend China's culture in the face of the global Westernisation (or Americanisation) of China's culture.<sup>31</sup> Yu Jianxing, for example, has called for “an operational political strategy for [Chinese] culture to deal with the impact of Western culture”,<sup>32</sup> for, as Zhong Yi'an argues, “protecting and developing national culture is necessary not only for the survival and development of the nation, but also for safeguarding national independence and sovereignty”.<sup>33</sup> Hu Huilin agrees, arguing that China requires a strategy for “national cultural security”, for “national culture” is an essential dimension of a nation's sovereignty. If a nation does not have the ability to determine, legislate, and administer its national culture, its security as a nation is compromised, for culture represents the basis of national unity and stability. The Chinese state must therefore act forcefully to protect China's “cultural ecology” and to regulate its cultural industry to ensure that its core cultural characteristics are protected.<sup>34</sup>

However, what is to be protected has become a matter of contention, for it is becoming clearer that — state intervention or no — China's culture

<sup>30</sup> Liu Hezhong, *Jingji quanqiuhua yu woguo qingnian jiazhi quxiang* (Economic Globalisation and the Value Orientation of China's Youth) (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 2004), pp. 89–191; see also Tang Yinghua, “Meiguo de wenhua baquanzhuyi dui qingnian de yingxiang” (American Cultural Hegemony and its Impact on Youth), in *Quanqiuhua: Xifanghua haishi Zhongguohua?* ed. Yu Keping, pp. 242–51.

<sup>31</sup> See Yu Yongding, “Cong Zhongguo de jiaodu kan quanqiuhua” (Globalisation from China's Perspective), in *Shejie jingji yanjiu zhongxin, Quanqiuhua yu 21 shiji* (Globalisation and the 21st Century) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2002), pp. 19–35.

<sup>32</sup> Yu Jianxiang, *Quanqiuhua: Yige pipingxing kaocha* (Globalisation: A Critical Review) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2003), pp. 118–52.

<sup>33</sup> Zhong Yi'an, “Jingji quanqiuhua yu wenhua duoyangxing” (Economic Globalisation and Cultural Diversity), *People's Daily*, 20 Jan. 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Hu Huilin, “Zai jiji de fazhan zhong baozhang Zhongguo de guojia wenhua anquan” (While Positively Developing, Safeguard China's National Cultural Security), *Wenyi bao*, 10 Oct. 2002.

just cannot remain immune from the cultural effects of globalisation. Indeed, amongst Chinese scholars and Party theorists there has been a lessening of commitment to the idea of an essentially Chinese culture, one that has persisted throughout the ages and that should continue and prosper into the future. Indeed, some theorists now regard the idea of an “essential” Chinese culture negatively, for the “idealisation” of culture may prevent China from formulating an appropriate policy to control the cultural effects of globalisation.<sup>35</sup> This can become harmful if it extends to a “cultural essentialism”, and this should be opposed, for it can lead to an overly negative reaction to the cultures of other nations.<sup>36</sup> The increasing sense of dilution of culture that accompanies globalisation has led, in both developed and developing countries, to a demand for the “defence of cultural purity”, sometimes of such intensity as to result in the emergence of ideological or religious fundamentalist beliefs and movements; these may heighten the tension between nations and even lead to clashes. This is particularly dangerous when it is linked to the rise of nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Opening wide to the outside world has allowed the ingress of numerous cultural forms and practices that inevitably dilute any such cultural essence, and this can have both positive and negative effects; the point is to employ the positive aspects to develop and modernise China’s culture, and to minimise the effects of its negative aspects. Yu Keping, himself a major figure in China’s globalisation debates, describes the diminishing appeal of the Chinese cultural essence argument as follows:

In the history of modern China, there have been two dominant views: a “Westernization View” (Xihua Lun) and a “Chinese Cultural Quintessence” (Guo Cui Lun) view. The Chinese Cultural Quintessence view has gradually lost its defensibility as Western popular music, fashion, books, magazines, and lifestyles entered China one after the other, following China’s economic reforms that opened it to more external influences. Cultural globalization has been a reality in [the] sense [that] a cultural identity or value identity has emerged, beyond a native or national cultural identity. Some Chinese scholars refer to it as “global culture”.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Nan Fan, “Quanqiu hua yu xiangxiang de keneng”.

<sup>36</sup> Du Hanfeng, “Quanqiu hua zhong de wenhua wenti” (Cultural Issues in Globalisation), *Dangdai shijie yu shehuizhuyi*, no. 3 (1998): 38–41.

<sup>37</sup> Gu Ping, “Lun guoji jushi de jige tedian” (On Several Features of the International Situation), *People’s Daily*, 2 Apr. 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Yu Keping, “From the Discourse of ‘Sino-West’ to ‘Globalization’”, p. 6.

The notion of a “global culture” has been received positively by some Party theorists, but with alarm by others. The latter tend to regard a very significant dimension of this “global culture” as involving the erosion of local cultures due to the increasing reach of global media enterprises, a process very difficult for national governments to control, regardless of their intention to do so.<sup>39</sup> For example, Wang Yingxia, a commentator for *People's Daily Online*, has argued that the globalisation of the media industry is inseparably related to economic globalisation. This is particularly the case in China, whose market is so extensive that “media magnates” have no option but to seek a significant share of its burgeoning and increasingly market-driven information economy. But in doing so, the media outlets they control inevitably represent a threat to domestic media and the culture they transmit. As Wang points out, “[it] is exactly the cultural nature of media products that makes it possible for transnational media enterprises to exert a corrosive effect on the culture of the host country”.<sup>40</sup> In Wang’s view, however, all need not be gloom and doom. On the one hand, foreign media outlets face the problem of adjusting their media products in light of local language and cultural differences, for consumers will tend to select products from or close to their local culture.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, because of the culturally sensitive nature of its activities, the media generally, but particularly global media, can and should be subject to a high degree of government supervision and control.<sup>42</sup>

One commentator who believes that there should be political intervention at both the national and international level to protect cultural diversity is Zi Huayuan, a senior research fellow with the China Arts Academy. Writing in the *China Daily*, Zi agrees that the world is indeed shrinking under the impact of globalisation, and that this has dramatic implications for the world’s cultures; the “processes of clashing, interaction, absorption and assimilation between various cultures are becoming much faster and easier than ever before”.<sup>43</sup> This does not mean, however, that all cultures will become the same as one

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<sup>39</sup> See Zhong Qiyong, *Jingji quanqiuhua yu kua diqu wenhua chuanbo* (Economic Globalisation and Cultural Transmission across Regions) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue xhubanshe, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Wang Yingxia, “How Much Threat Will Globalisation Bring to China?”, *People's Daily Online* <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200207/21/>> [Sept. 2004].

<sup>41</sup> A suggestion reinforced by Hooper’s findings. See “Globalisation and Resistance in Post-Mao China: The Case of Foreign Consumer Products”.

<sup>42</sup> For an extended analysis of the role of the media in China’s embrace of globalisation, see Li Jinquan, *Chinese Media, Global Contexts* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> Zi Huayuan, “China: Maintain our Cultural Diversity”, *China Daily*, 7 Feb. 2001.

another; but it does suggest as necessary the intervention of governments and international cooperation to safeguard cultural diversity. This includes protection of the world's "cultural ecology", which in turn implies state intervention to prevent the destruction of significant cultural sites and practices. In particular, protection of cultural communities from rampant development and materialism should be a necessary aspect of the state's response to the cultural impact of globalisation. The state should mobilise the electronic and digital technologies that have made globalisation possible to ensure that cultural artefacts and practices threatened by globalisation are recorded, preserved and studied in "folklore villages and museums".

Another issue that has alarmed Chinese scholars and Party theorists is the threat that globalisation poses to the integrity of the Chinese language. It is evident that English is fast becoming the global language, and its intrusion via media outlets and the determination of so many young Chinese to learn it suggest that even a language as extensive and deeply-rooted as Chinese may not be immune from the erosive effects of linguistic globalisation. In this context, the "beautiful" Chinese language, as one commentator described it, may now be under threat. Chinese scholars and writers have warned that those learning English should do so with a cautious attitude and not forget their Chinese. "English, after all, is only a tool to know the world ... Chinese is the root from which we grow, and Chinese is the origin of our literature". Chinese literature, in particular, must be revitalised in the face of challenges posed by globalisation.<sup>44</sup>

Other Chinese scholars and Party theorists are more sanguine about the cultural influence of globalisation, for it is, they believe, a process that no individual country or group of countries can control; globalisation is not, therefore, synonymous with the "Americanisation" of culture. The US can no more control the process of globalisation than the developing countries; it is a "two-edged sword" for the US, as for all countries. If developing countries like China handle their involvement with globalisation carefully, it can be turned to their advantage, and the Americanisation of China's culture is not an inevitable outcome of globalisation.<sup>45</sup> Just as economic globalisation does not

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<sup>44</sup> Yu Kuangchung, Mo Yan, Su Tong and Ma Yuan, "Protection of Chinese Language Urged", *People's Daily Online* <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200405/27>> [Sept. 2004].

<sup>45</sup> See "Beijing Tells UN Globalization, Liberalization Should Benefit All", *Survey of World Broadcasts*, FED3375, 11 Apr. 1998.

mean economic homogeneity, political and cultural globalisation does not signal the end of the diversity of national characteristics.<sup>46</sup> China's theorists also point to the opposition to globalisation within Western capitalist nations themselves; the spread of a global culture is not without its critics and resistance in such countries. Moreover, the information revolution that is so important a dimension of economic globalisation has had the positive effect of facilitating cultural and information exchange; learning from the beneficial aspects of other countries' cultures has become much faster and easier as a result of globalisation.<sup>47</sup> In the new era of globalisation, it is possible for different cultures to "mutually complement and jointly develop"; and in this exercise, China's culture, one based on "peace and tolerance", has much to offer other cultures.<sup>48</sup> The way in which Chinese responds to globalisation should thus be proactive and assertive. China should not just perceive itself as a passive victim of cultural globalisation, for China can contribute much to the process of globalisation in the cultural realm. This does not imply abandonment of China's specific national characteristics, but it does suggest the possibility of China actively contributing its own cultural values to this process. An example drawn from the Chinese tradition, given by Pang Pu, is the principle of "peace reigns under heaven"; this could serve, he argues, to alleviate problems and conflicts that arise in the course of globalisation.<sup>49</sup> The famous sociologist Fei Xiaotong agrees, arguing that China can offer the West a conception of the relationship between man and nature different to that which occurs in Western culture. For this reason, there should "be an exchange between cultures".<sup>50</sup> One Chinese scholar has gone further, claiming that Chinese culture could be a globalised culture because of

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<sup>46</sup> "Qianyan" [Preface], in Zheng Hui (ed.), *Jingji quanqiu hua yu Zhongguo zhengzhi fazhan zhanlue* (Economic Globalisation and the Strategy for Political Development in China) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2003).

<sup>47</sup> Gu Ping, "Lun guoji jushi de jige tedian".

<sup>48</sup> Lee, F., "Eight Opportunities before China in the Next 20 Years", *People's Daily Online* <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn.200111/02/>> [Aug. 2004].

<sup>49</sup> Pang Pu, "Quanqiu hua yu 'tianxiaping'" (Globalisation and "Peace Reigns under Heaven"), *Lianhe zaobao*, 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Fei Xiaotong, "Wenhualun zhong ren yu ziran guanxi de zai renshi" (Rethinking the Relationship between Humankind and Nature), in *Zhongguo wenhua yu quanqiu hua* (Chinese Culture and Globalisation), ed. Fei Xiaotong and Jacques Derrida (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), pp. 1–11.

its spiritual and reflective characteristics, whereas Western culture, which is a materialist culture, could not.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, some Chinese theorists have accepted that, with the erosion of cultural particularisms, whether regional, national or local, the conditions are emerging for the creation of a “global person”, living within a “global village”.<sup>52</sup> Such a person is surrounded and socialised by global cultural information, and becomes — rather than a Chinese, American, French or Russian person — “global” in their outlook and sense of identity. Moreover, the global culture absorbed by this “global person” is the result of a fusion of different cultures, and not one entirely dominated by any one particular culture. In this context, it is possible that universal values will transcend national borders, social systems and political ideologies, and spread globally. This has to be regarded as a positive development, for it may have the effect of reducing the tensions that arise from narrow cultural loyalties and attendant cultural misunderstandings.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, one Chinese scholar has argued that China “should have a policy of cultural internationalism and develop its national culture by learning from other cultures”.<sup>54</sup> Yet another has suggested China should “learn from other civilisations and develop its cultural civilisation”.<sup>55</sup> Some Party theorists have even perceived in the process of cultural globalisation the premise for the creation of socialism at a global level. After all, socialism implies a commitment, not just to local and national particularisms, but to the global community of humanity.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Zhang Xinggang, “Rang zuotian yu mingtian xiangyu zai jintian” (Let Yesterday and Tomorrow Meet Today), in *Zhongguo wenhua yu quanqiuhua*, ed. Fei Xiaotong and Jacques Derrida, pp. 25–44.

<sup>52</sup> For positive references to the concept of the “global village”, see Hu Jintao, “Shidao mulin youhao gongtong fazhan fanrong” (Lasting Friendly Neighbours for Common Development and Prosperity), *People’s Daily*, 2 June 2003; Gu Ping, “Weida minzu fuxing de daolu xuanze — lun Zhongguo de heping jueqi” (The Road Chosen for Rejuvenation of a Great Nation — on China’s Peaceful Rise), *People’s Daily*, 17 Feb. 2004.

<sup>53</sup> Tan Junjiu, “Thinking and Arguing on Globalization”, in *Globalization and Antinomies*, ed. Yu Keping (Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 1998), pp. 180–200.

<sup>54</sup> Wang Fenzhen, “Quanqiuhua he wenhua tongyixing” (Globalisation and Cultural Identity), *Makesizhuyi yu xianshi*, no. 6 (1998): 55–6.

<sup>55</sup> Li Shen zhi, “Quanqiuhua yu Zhongguo wenhua”, pp. 3–11.

<sup>56</sup> Yuan Yida, “Shijie lishi yu geren jiefang” (World History and the Liberation of the Individual) in *Makesizhuyi yu quanqiuhua: ‘Deyizhi yishixingtai’ de dangdai chanshi* (Marxism and Globalisation: A Contemporary Interpretation of ‘The German Ideology’),

There are thus Chinese scholars and Party theorists who fear cultural globalisation and oppose it and those who regard it in a positive light. Between these there has been an acrimonious exchange.<sup>57</sup> They are not divided on the issue of cultural globalisation alone, for their differences are based on a general response to globalisation, particularly economic globalisation and its impact on China.<sup>58</sup> For theorists sometimes referred to as neoliberals, acceptance of a largely free market approach to globalisation (the market represents the fairest and most rational mechanism for the allocation of resources) implies also acceptance, indeed endorsement, of the unimpeded movement of ideas and values, for this is an essential dimension of a genuine market economy and free society.<sup>59</sup> From this perspective, “China needs more cultural globalisation, not less.”<sup>60</sup> Chinese theorists of this persuasion have looked admiringly at the supposed freedoms available to the citizens of capitalist democracies, particularly the US, seeing in their application in China the cure for many of China’s political problems and cultural ailments. In particular, the possibility of genuine political reform in China depends on the development of a “modern” political culture, one in which slavish adherence to authority has been supplanted by a democratic ethos of political and legal equality, open competition for political office, and a free and impartial media. There is thus amongst China’s neoliberals admiration for the politics and cultures of the West and a desire to see China emulate these, for only by doing so can it make the transition from authoritarian one-party rule to democracy. Moreover, some Chinese intellectuals have perceived in globalisation’s spread of

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ed. Wang Dong, Feng Ziyi and Nie Jinfang (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2003), pp. 221–8.

<sup>57</sup> See Li Jinqun, “Zhongguo meiti de quanqixing he minzuxing” (Globality and Nationality of China’s Media), *21 shiji* <[http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk\\_wzdetails.asp?id=2027](http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=2027)> [21 June 2004].

<sup>58</sup> For general analysis of perceptions of globalisation in China, see Nick Knight, “Imagining Globalisation: The World and Nation in Chinese Communist Party Ideology”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, no. 3 (2003): 318–37; and Crane, “Imagining the Economic Nation: Globalisation in China”, pp. 215–32.

<sup>59</sup> For a description of the debate between neo-liberals and the New Left in China, see Zhu Xueqin, “Xin zuopai yu ziyoushuyi zi Zheng” (The Debate between the New Left and Neo-liberalism), Sohu, <<http://cul.sohu.com/20040730/n221275919.html>> [3 Jan. 2005].

<sup>60</sup> Hao Jian, “You Zhongguo tese de fan quanqihua” (Anti-globalisation with Chinese Characteristics), *Nanfang wentan*, no. 6 (2002).

liberal values the dissemination of the conditions for the eventual realisation of democratic global governance.<sup>61</sup>

However, this perspective, of willing acceptance of the effects of cultural globalisation in China, has clearly moved ahead of mainstream opinion.<sup>62</sup> As critics of the neoliberal position point out, “[a]lthough some groups of people worship the United States and incline towards cosmopolitanism, the identification of the Chinese nation with patriotism is still the mainstream view”.<sup>63</sup> As Cao Tianyu, identified with China’s New Left, has caustically asked, “is it good to turn China into the United States? The liberals think that it would be wonderful.”<sup>64</sup> Cao is also critical of the inadequately proactive stance taken by the Chinese state; it has failed to manage cultural change in a way that avoids the Westernisation of China’s culture. The challenge, he suggests, is for China to establish an “alternative modernity”, one “that reaches beyond the logic of capitalist expansion”, and which is guided by the final goal of “complete humanitarianism”. Cao’s understanding of this alternative modernity nevertheless derives many of its values from the Western political tradition, including elements of liberalism:

It seeks to implement equal and fair principles in the main sectors of social and economic life, democratic control of assets and production and fair distribution of surplus, in order to assure individual development based on resources. It differs from traditional socialism in that it mainly uses the market system in its economy; it implements policies of democratization in politics, in the leading roles of the Party, and in the establishment of citizen [civil?] society. It adopts the positive achievements of human and civil rights and democracy from liberalism ...<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See Yu Keping and Zhang Shengjun (eds.), *Quanqiuhua: Quanqiu zhili* (Globalisation: Global Governance) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003).

<sup>62</sup> For a critique of neo-liberalism, see Li Qiqing, “Quanqiuhua beijing xia de xin ziyoushuyi” (Neo-liberalism in the Age of Globalisation), in *Quanqiuhua yu xin ziyoushuyi* (Globalisation and neo-liberalism), ed. Li Qiqing and Li Yuanqi (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2003), pp. 1–28.

<sup>63</sup> Cao Tianyu, “The Theory and Practice of the Chinese Path”, *The Chinese Economy* 36, no. 4 (July–Aug. 2004): 97. See also Cao Tianyu (ed.), *Xiandaihua, quanqiuhua yu Zhongguo daolu* (Modernisation, Globalisation and China’s Road) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> Cao Tianyu, “The Theory and Practice of the Chinese Path”, p. 97.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

The position of the New Left is also, like the neoliberals, in the minority. Mainstream opinion continues to regard it as the role of the Chinese state to intervene to protect “Chinese” culture from the effects of cultural globalisation; it is not to indulge in cultural experiments of the sort proposed by Cao Tianyu, experiments that are themselves permeated by values not identifiable as “Chinese”. Party theorists, in particular, are inclined to regard manifestations of Westernisation negatively. For example, Gao Shusheng, writing in the authoritative *People's Daily*, argues forcefully against the view that the structure of China's culture or its lifestyle should be internationalised, globalised or westernised.<sup>66</sup> Because globalisation has brought in its train a “cultural crisis” in the world, precipitated by the spread of the market economy and the information economy, China cannot just abandon the cultural field to the unchecked spread of Western and American values.<sup>67</sup> And in this endeavour, the Chinese nation-state has a major role to play.

### **Globalisation, Culture and the Nation-state: The View of China's Leaders**

There is thus an array of views on the cultural impact of globalisation amongst China's scholars and Party theorists. However, a prominent theme in the Chinese discourse on globalisation is that China's culture must not be allowed to become “Americanised” or “Westernised”, for this would constitute a serious challenge to the integrity of the Chinese nation. The “survival and development of the nation” depends on China's capacity to protect and develop its national culture.<sup>68</sup> As He Qing argues, “to safeguard national culture is a matter of life and death for the Chinese nation”. Rejecting the “globalisation myth” that the nation-state is no longer able to defend the economic and political independence of the nation, He asserts that the Chinese nation-state continues to play a very important role in safeguarding China's national culture.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Gao Shusheng, “Ying zhengque shiyong ‘yu guojia jiegui’ tifa” (The Term “Coming into Line with the International” Should be Used Properly), *People's Daily*, 1 Sept. 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Li Shenzhi, “Quanqiu hua yu Zhongguo wenhua”, pp. 3–11; see also Chen Dingjia, *Quanqiu hua yu shenfen weiji* (Globalisation and Identity Crisis) (Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe, 2003), pp. 1–22.

<sup>68</sup> Zhong Yi'an, “Jingji quanqiu hua yu wenhua duoyangxing”.

<sup>69</sup> He Qing, *Quanqiu hua yu guojia yishi de shuairwei* (Globalisation and the Decline of National Consciousness) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin chubanshe, 2003).

China's leaders agree. It is quite evident that they are cognisant of the threat globalisation poses China's national culture, and have made stirring statements about the need to strengthen it. For example, Jiang Zemin recognised that China was confronted, in the context of "opening wide to the outside", with the "interaction of different thoughts and cultures".<sup>70</sup> There are, he stated, "a few countries that have tried to force their own values, economic regime and social system on other countries by taking advantage of economic globalisation".<sup>71</sup> To counter this threat, he argued, "we must take it as a crucial task in our cultural development to carry forward and cultivate the national spirit and incorporate it into our national education and the entire process of building spiritual civilisation..."<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Zhu Rongji argued in 2003 for a redoubling of efforts to build a socialist spiritual civilisation. This would involve putting the Program for the Improvement of Civic Morality into practice, intensifying education in patriotism and fostering a "national spirit". It would also involve "protection of our cultural relics and our cultural heritage".<sup>73</sup>

This concern with "national spirit"<sup>74</sup> is reflected in the CCP's leaders' glowing commentaries on the history of the Chinese "nation" and their lauding of patriotism as a worthy value of the modern Chinese citizen.<sup>75</sup> "Opening to

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<sup>70</sup> Jiang Zemin, "Quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi shiye xin jumian" (Building a Prosperous Society in an All-round Way and Create a New Situation for Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics), *People's Daily*, 18 Nov. 2002.

<sup>71</sup> Jiang Zemin, "Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua".

<sup>72</sup> Jiang Zemin, "Quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi shiye xin jumian".

<sup>73</sup> Zhu Rongji, "Zhengfu gongzuo baogao" (Report on the Work of the Government), *People's Daily*, 6 Mar. 2003.

<sup>74</sup> For a detailed commentary on the concept of "national spirit" in the speeches of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, see Zhang Yingwei, "Lun minzu jingshen" (On National Spirit), *Guangming Daily*, 8 June 2004.

<sup>75</sup> See Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). Zhao makes the point that the Chinese nation-state is a relatively modern construction, one based on European notions of the nation. This is not a position shared by China's leaders who talk as though the Chinese "nation" has existed since time immemorial, a clearly ahistorical perspective on China's history, but nevertheless useful for engendering patriotic sentiment amongst the Chinese population. See for example Hu Jintao, "Zai jinian Mao Zedong tongzhi

the outside” is not accepted as necessarily leading to a diminished identification with “China” (as the Party leaders understand this) on the part of the Chinese people, regardless of their increased exposure to external cultural and economic influences and the consequent possible modification of their Chinese identity. Rather, external influences can be countered through ramping up the discourse of patriotism and appealing to the nationalist impulses of the Chinese people. As *People's Daily* declared, “[c]ultural identity ... is inevitably connected with nationalism”.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, the importance of patriotic education was a significant theme in many of Jiang Zemin's speeches. For example, in his important speech to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the CCP, patriotism was listed first in the ideology that the CCP needed to advocate to overcome the deleterious influence on Chinese values resulting from the policy of “opening wide”:

We should advocate the ideology of patriotism, collectivism and socialism among all people, combat and resist money worship, hedonism, ultra-egoism and other decadent ideas, enhance the Chinese people's national self-esteem, self confidence and sense of pride, and stimulate them to make unremitting efforts for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.<sup>77</sup>

In a similar vein, Wen Jiabao argued in 2004 that “we will vigorously promote a national spirit centred on patriotism and intensify the ideological and moral education of young people in particular”.<sup>78</sup>

This appeal to nationalism is founded not just on the need to seek legitimacy for the CCP as it moves in practice further from core tenets of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, but as a counter to the deleterious ideas and cultural practices introduced by globalisation that erode identification with Chinese cultural values and China as a nation. Chinese leaders are therefore implicitly conceding that globalisation does possess a powerful potential to erode China's sovereignty; but their perspective remains that this can be forestalled through an appeal to nationalism and vigilance on the part of the Chinese state.

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danchen 110 zhounian zuotanhui shang de jianghua” (Speech at a CPC Central Committee Discussion to Commemorate the 110th Anniversary of the Birth of Comrade Mao Zedong), *People's Daily*, 27 Dec. 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Nan Fan, “Quanqiu hua yu xiangxiang de keneng”.

<sup>77</sup> Jiang Zemin, “Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua”.

<sup>78</sup> Wen Jiabao, “Zhengfu gongzuo baogao” (Report on the Work of the Government), *People's Daily*, 17 Mar. 2004.

China's leaders have constantly reiterated the view that the Chinese state must act decisively to both defend its cultural heritage and develop an "advanced culture with distinct Chinese characteristics and to build a socialist spiritual civilisation".<sup>79</sup> This view — that the state can and should intervene to defend China's culture — is a reflection of a fundamental belief in the sovereignty and continuing capacity of nation-states, despite the influence of globalisation. As China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan argued in 1999, the concept of sovereignty remained relevant "[in] spite of the major changes in the post-Cold War international situation": "these principles [sovereign equality, mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs] are by no means out-of-date. Any deviation from or violation of these principles would destroy the universally-recognised norms governing international relations."<sup>80</sup> Jiang Zemin repeated this view in 2002, asserting that "the principles of sovereign equality of all countries, mutual respect for the sovereignty of every state and non-interference in each other's internal affairs remain at the base of international relations".<sup>81</sup> Similarly Qian Qichen argued in 2004 that "despite the rapid development of economic globalisation and the spread of information, the independence of the state and nation ... has not weakened".<sup>82</sup> The paramount duty of any nation-state is thus to protect its sovereignty, and China's leaders perceive no reason why engagement with globalisation should be allowed to diminish this function. China had to defend its sovereignty as a nation-state in line with the fundamental principles of international relations, and work to enhance its national interests within the context created by economic globalisation.<sup>83</sup> As Tang Jiaxuan insisted, the "Chinese Government and people will, as always, resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity",<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Jiang Zemin, "Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua".

<sup>80</sup> Tang Jiaxuan, "China's Position on Current International Issues", *Beijing Review* (11 Oct. 1999): 9–11.

<sup>81</sup> Xiao Shao, "Jiang Calls for New World Order", *China Daily*, 8 Sept. 2000.

<sup>82</sup> Qian Qichen, "Meiguo guojia anquan zhanlue tiaozheng yu xin shiji chu de guoji guanxi" (US National Security Strategy Adjustment and International Relations in the New Century), *People's Daily*, 19 Jan. 2004.

<sup>83</sup> See Wen Jiabao, "Jiwang kailai, quanmian tuijin Zhong Fei youhao hezuo" (Pushing Forward the Overall Friendly Cooperation between China and Africa on the Basis of Past Achievements), *People's Daily*, 16 Dec. 2003.

<sup>84</sup> Tang Jiaxuan, "China's Position on Current International Issues".

a position echoed by Jiang Zemin who stated “Chinese Communists are rock firm in their resolve to safeguard state sovereignty and territorial integrity.”<sup>85</sup> Consequently, the objective of China’s diplomacy must remain, as Qian Qichen pointed out, “to protect the integrity of [China’s] national territory and to ensure the integrity of [its] national sovereignty”.<sup>86</sup>

China’s leaders regard the continuing capacity of the Chinese nation-state to protect its sovereignty as incorporating protection of its cultural realm. Vigilance on the part of a strong and increasingly powerful China will be sufficient to counter any threat to its sovereignty, including threats to its culture. Wen Jiabao, echoing the position adopted by the former Premier Zhu Rongji,<sup>87</sup> has repeatedly stressed the importance of state intervention to achieve desirable cultural outcomes, including protection of China’s cultural heritage from the erosive effects of globalisation, and to develop “an advanced socialist culture”:

The people’s intellectual and cultural needs are constantly increasing along with economic development and social progress in China, so we must attach greater importance to cultural development. It is necessary to energetically develop an advanced socialist culture. We will vigorously promote a national spirit centred on patriotism and intensify the ideological and moral education of young people in particular. We must encourage the general public to participate in activities designed to promote spiritual civilisation. We will strengthen basic-level cultural development in rural areas, urban communities and enterprises. We will spread scientific knowledge and promote a scientific spirit, a scientific and healthy lifestyle and good manners. We will further develop literature, art, the press, publishing, radio, film and television. We will follow a strategy of product excellence to provide more healthful, inspiring cultural works that people can enjoy.<sup>88</sup>

This statement from one of China’s paramount leaders exemplifies the cultural challenge that globalisation poses to those charged with the responsibility of opening China to the world. It manifests awareness that economic reform has brought in its train cultural changes that do constitute a threat to China’s culture. As Wen Jiabao admitted, “wide access to TV and the Internet allows

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<sup>85</sup> Jiang Zemin, “Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua”.

<sup>86</sup> Zhongmei Yang, *Qian Qichen: Zhonggong waijiao jiaofu* (Qian Qichen: The Godfather of CCP Diplomacy) (Taipei: Shibao wenhua chuban, 1999), p. 18.

<sup>87</sup> Zhu Rongji, “Zhengfu gongzuo baogao”.

<sup>88</sup> Wen Jiabao, “Zhengfu gongzuo baogao” (Report on the Work of the Government), *People’s Daily*, 17 Mar. 2004.

spiritual and cultural products, healthy or harmful, positive or negative, to spread in the world at an unprecedented pace, directly or indirectly affecting people's minds, values and way of life". These dangers require the intervention of the Chinese state to ensure that the "national and cultural heritage" is protected. Moreover, they require the maintenance of those values conventionally associated with the development of a socialist society; this is to be achieved through developing a sense of patriotism in the population through ideological and moral education.<sup>89</sup> China's leaders thus do not accept that their determination to engage more deeply with globalisation implies a lessening of their ability to hold the line on cultural issues; there is a strong sense of the need for political intervention on the part of the state to ensure desired cultural outcomes. Indeed, their confidence that globalisation can be managed, by the Chinese nation-state and nation-states acting in concert, extends as well to the management and control of the cultural effects of globalisation. "It requires, more than ever before", Wen Jiabao asserted, "close inter-governmental and non-governmental cooperation to promote the fine culture of every nation and defuse moral crises in the world".<sup>90</sup>

However, what is not evident in such rather sanguine assertions is recognition of the paradoxical challenge that globalisation poses the Chinese state in the realm of culture as it increasingly opens its markets to the effects of economic globalisation. Nowhere is this more evident than in China's leaders' determination to expand China's cultural market and to further open it to the global economy. As Wen Jiabao stated:

We should promote the reform of the system and innovation of the mechanism of the cultural industry, give more support to non-profit cultural undertakings and improve our policy for the cultural industry to give a greater role to the market and ensure the simultaneous development of cultural undertakings and cultural industry. We will continue to strengthen the development and management of the market for cultural products and the internet, fighting unremittingly against pornographic and illegal publications and actively conduct cultural exchanges with other countries.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> For a vivid description of the "patriotic education" introduced by the Chinese state since 1989, see Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction*, Ch. 6.

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Lu Hong, Ren Yujun *et al.*, "Gongtong puxie Zhong Mei guanxi xin pianzhang" (Joining Hands and Working Together to Build a Better Future for China-US Relations), *People's Daily*, 20 May 2003.

<sup>91</sup> Wen Jiabao, "Zhengfu gongzuo baogao", 2004.

On the one hand, Wen's statement urges greater commodification of culture through the development of the market for cultural products, a position endorsed by other Chinese leaders. Indeed, Hu Jintao argued in 2004 for the development of a cultural market that extends beyond the territorial boundaries of the Chinese state: "China encourages media cooperation to jointly build an Asia-wide cultural market."<sup>92</sup> Moreover, the cultural market is recognised as a potentially global market, and China's leaders have indicated every intention of taking advantage of this through their economic strategy of China "going global".<sup>93</sup> The market within which the culture industry operates — within China, regionally and globally — will, by implication, be increasingly freed of the constraints of state intervention. The cultural market will be "managed" in China in a way that parallels the Chinese state's increasingly hands-off approach to the economy. On the other hand, China's leaders have made it clear that they regard the cultural realm as amenable to regulation by the state. As Wen Jiabao argued, "[w]e will press ahead with formulating an overall plan for cultural restructuring and a program for cultural development", a plan that includes control of "pornography and illegal publications" and protection of "our cultural relics and archives as well as our national and cultural heritage."<sup>94</sup> Similarly, the "development and management of internet websites should be strengthened".<sup>95</sup> In other words, the Chinese state will simultaneously withdraw from the realm of culture in some areas, leaving these to the vagaries of market forces, and intervene more assertively

<sup>92</sup> Hu Jintao, "Zhongguo de fazhan, Yazhou de jiyu".

<sup>93</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu wanshan shehuizhuyi shichang jingji tizhi ruogan wenti de jue ding" (The Central Committee of the CPC's Decision on Issues Regarding the Improvement of the Socialist Market Economic System), *People's Daily*, 22 Oct. 2003. For commentary on this strategy, see Wang Changsheng et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo yu shijie jingji fazhan baogao (2004 nian): Quanchiuhua xia de jingji huanjing zhili yu shichang kaifang* [China and the World Economy Development Report (2004): Business Environment Improvement and Market Openness in the Context of Globalisation] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003), pp. 75–7.

<sup>94</sup> Wen Jiabao, "Zhengfu gongzuo baogao" (2004).

<sup>95</sup> Zhu Rongji, "Zhengfu gongzuo baogao" (Report on the Work of Government), *People's Daily*, 6 Mar. 2003. For further discussion of the need for the Chinese authorities to dominate public opinion through control of the Internet, see Yu Zeyuan, "Zhongguo dangju yao zhanju wangshang yulun qiangshi" (The Current Chinese Authorities want to Dominate Public Opinion on the Internet), *Lianhe zaobao*, 9 Dec. 2004.

in it in others when a threat is perceived to China's "national spirit", as defined by the Chinese state.<sup>96</sup>

## **The Paradox of Globalisation: Cultural Unification, Cultural Fragmentation**

China's leaders are thus increasingly caught in a pincer movement of their own making, for their development and expansion of the cultural market will necessitate a rear-guard political action on the part of the Chinese state that implicitly challenges the premise of a genuine market approach to culture. As the economic reforms deepen and the cultural market becomes more extensive and diverse, the state will need to be increasingly interventionist to achieve desired cultural outcomes. Hence, an increased but inconsistent authoritarianism existing alongside an increasingly laissez-faire approach to the market emerges as one of the paradoxes that China confronts as it struggles to reconcile the conflicting imperatives resulting from its fervent embrace of globalisation.

At the moment, however, China's leaders cling to the hope that China's close engagement with global capital and its expansion of the cultural market will not have the opposite effect to that desired. On the one hand, they fear growing consumerism, materialism and individualism amongst China's population and particularly amongst its youth, and the disappearance of any genuine commitment to a "socialist spiritual civilisation". The spectre here is cultural fragmentation and anomie, and loss of anything resembling a "Chinese" cultural identity, as cultural unity is replaced by cultural diversity.<sup>97</sup> On the other, China's leaders fear global culture's homogenising tendency, and its dominance by Western and in particular American culture as purveyed by the internet, satellite television, film and other channels of cultural communication.<sup>98</sup> They find particularly worrying the fact

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<sup>96</sup> For an extended argument about how and why the Chinese state should intervene to both encourage and police the cultural market, see Hu Huilin, "Zai jiji de fazhan zhong baozhang Zhongguo de guojia wenhua anquan".

<sup>97</sup> See Zhong Yi'an, "Jingji quanqiu hua yu wenhua duoyangxing".

<sup>98</sup> For a discussion of "Hollywood's intention to occupy the Chinese market" as part of America's drive for "cultural hegemony", see Yi Hong and Xiao Zhiwei, "Haolaiwu de quanqiu hua celue yu Zhongguo dianying de fazhan" (Hollywood's Globalisation Tactics and the Development of China's Movies), in *Quanqiu hua yu shenfen weiji*, ed. Chen Dingjia, pp. 134–71; also Zhang Huijun, *Quanqiu hua huanjing xia de Zhongguo dianying chanye sikao* (Reflections on China's Movie Industry in the Environment of Globalisation) (Beijing: Beijing Film Academy, 2004).

that, of all the information disseminated via the internet, only one per cent is in the Chinese language.<sup>99</sup> Here the spectre is cultural unification, a “Chinese” culture increasingly unified under the malign influence of American cultural values allowed entry via the processes of globalisation. Their strident assertions that this will not be so, that the Chinese nation-state will never surrender its cultural sovereignty to the homogenising pressures of cultural globalisation and allow the complete Americanisation of its culture, underpins the interventionist arm of its cultural policy.<sup>100</sup>

This latter perspective may, unwittingly, be premised on an appropriate appraisal of the limitations to the homogenising tendency of cultural globalisation. For the progressive fragmentation of the market into a multiplicity of markets serves to construct and in turn appeal to diverse consumer desires, a process that inevitably poses a very significant impediment to the progressive homogenisation of culture under the impact of globalisation.<sup>101</sup> Increasing segmentation of the market facilitates the construction of a potentially vast number of identities, as the Chinese are tempted to define themselves in terms of a bewildering variety of new products, lifestyles and cultural tastes.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, new social divisions — of generation, class and region — are emerging under the impact of global capital’s intrusion into Chinese society.<sup>103</sup> There is increasing diversity and fragmentation of culture in China, as the “places” within which particular cultures can emerge multiply. There is no unproblematic shift to cultural homogenisation resulting from the

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<sup>99</sup> Hu Huilin, “Zai jiji de fazhan zhong baozhang Zhongguo de guojia wenhua anquan”.

<sup>100</sup> See “Globalization Won’t be Homogenization”, *China Daily*, 21 Oct. 1997.

<sup>101</sup> See Ning Wang, “Globalization and Culture: The Chinese Cultural and Intellectual Strategy”, *Neohelicon* 29, no. 2 (2002): 103–16.

<sup>102</sup> A point persuasively made by Arif Dirlik, “Markets, Culture, Power: The Making of a ‘Second Cultural Revolution’ in China”, *Asian Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (Mar. 2001): 1–34; and Arif Dirlik, “Integrating and Safeguarding Cultures”, *Politica internazionale*, nos. 1–2 (Jan./Apr. 2001): 209–16; see also Hooper, “Globalisation and Resistance in Post-Mao China: The Case of Foreign Consumer Products”; and Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner (eds.), *Articulating the Global and the Local: Globalisation and Cultural Studies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p. 9.

<sup>103</sup> Dirlik, “Markets, Culture, Power: The Making of a ‘Second Cultural Revolution’ in China”, p. 30.

unifying tendencies of globalisation. As Dirlik points out, “[g]lobalisation ... produces not just global integration, but global fragmentation”.<sup>104</sup> Liu Kang’s portrait of contemporary Chinese culture — fragmented, anomic, acquisitive, increasingly individualised — thus represents an appropriate rendition of the diverse cultural palette that has emerged in response to the marketisation and globalisation of China’s society.<sup>105</sup>

However, while an undiluted shift to cultural homogenisation may be avoided, not through any deliberate manoeuvre on the part of the Chinese state, globalisation’s underlying tendency towards cultural homogenisation may not be so easily deflected. For there is in globalisation a unifying principle that has the potential to negate the Chinese state’s attempts to retain anything resembling a “Chinese” culture built on a “socialist spiritual civilisation”. And this unifying principle is the implacable logic of capitalism, in which individuals are obliged to relate to one another through the impersonal contractual relationships that define a market-based society. As the effects of capitalism spread throughout the Chinese social formation, it will increasingly be the “callous cash payment” and “egotistical calculation” of the market that challenges and erodes time-honoured mores that have governed human relationships and constructed Chinese identities.<sup>106</sup> Jiang Zemin’s criticism of “money worship” and “ultra-egoism” reflects a partial recognition of the causes of the displacement of both traditional Chinese values and socialist attitudes. However, taking the moralistic high ground, as Jiang and his successors have done, wagging their collective admonitory finger at the Chinese people, will in the longer term have little effect.<sup>107</sup> The economic principle will ultimately assert itself: a social formation built on a market economy will inevitably induce economic practices and orientations on the part of individuals that conform to the market’s ethos of competition, individualism and consumerism. And Chinese leaders from Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao have enthusiastically embraced, and have vowed to reinforce and extend, the market within China and to continue to integrate

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>105</sup> Liu Kang, *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*; and Liu Kang, *Quanqiuhua, minzuhua*, pp. 3–72.

<sup>106</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 70.

<sup>107</sup> Jiang spoke of the need for a “socialist culture” that would cultivate “citizens from generation to generation who have lofty ideals, moral integrity, a better education and a good sense of discipline”. “Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua”, p. 10.

China into the global capitalist economy. The cultural effects of this policy, in terms of China's leaders own continually repeated interpretation of Marxist theory, is inevitably a transformation of China's culture to adapt to the demands and practices of this shift to capitalism within the Chinese social formation. And it is obvious that this is what is occurring. In one sense, then, there is some logic to the theoretical insistence of China's leaders that the "forces of production" will generate cultural practices and institutions appropriate to their development.<sup>108</sup> What is not quite so logical is the lamentation emanating from those very same leaders on recognising that the cultural effects of capitalism and economic globalisation are very different from their fond imaginings of how the Chinese people should behave in a society constructed on the basis of a thriving "socialist" market economy.

The tension created by the cultural effects of China's leaders' own policies has resulted in their increased determination to employ the offices of the Chinese state to prescribe acceptable cultural practices — "patriotism, collectivism and socialism" — and to proscribe the supposedly unhealthy manifestations of life in a predominantly market society.<sup>109</sup> The attempt to resolve this tension will propel the Chinese state to increasingly intervene in the attempt to define and reinforce what it regards as acceptable "Chinese" culture.<sup>110</sup> The likely result will be an increasingly narrow definition of "Chinese" culture, constructed of an unwieldy admixture of traditional Chinese values ("distinct Chinese characteristics", as

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<sup>108</sup> Jiang Zemin expressed this view as follows: "Productive forces are the most dynamic and the most revolutionary factor. It is also the ultimate decisive force of social development ... The contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production and between economic base and superstructure constitutes the basic social contradiction. The movement of this basic contradiction determines the direction of the changes in the nature of society and the direction of social, economic, political and cultural development." "Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua", p. 8. See also Zhu Rongji, "Zhengfu gongzuo baogao" (2003), p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Jiang Zemin, "Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua".

<sup>110</sup> Recent evidence suggests that this is in fact occurring. On 3 August 2005, the Culture Ministry announced that China would bar new foreign television channels from entering China. Censorship would be stepped up to "safeguard national cultural security". See Eric Teo Chu Cheow, "Grumbles within an Awakening Giant", *The Australian*, 22 Aug. 2005.

Jiang Zemin described them),<sup>111</sup> nationalism and atavistic representations of appropriate conduct in a “socialist spiritual civilisation”.<sup>112</sup> The fragility of this supposedly national culture will be severely tested, as globalisation brings to the Chinese population increased exposure to different and apparently alien lifestyles, values and mores, and the orientation to personal relationships characteristic of a market-based society. Moreover, the Chinese state’s objective of defending a “Chinese” culture will from the outset be compromised by its parallel insistence that China develop its “cultural market” and its already intimate relationship with the culture-transmitting media corporations that are such a prominent driver of global cultural change.<sup>113</sup>

Its policy on globalisation will thus confront the Chinese state with a cultural paradox that it will be unable to resolve, for the levers of cultural transformation will be increasingly inaccessible to state control. And the counter-vailing cultural tendencies of globalisation — towards a cultural homogenisation underpinned by the market principle and a cultural fragmentation that constructs an ever-increasing array of identities — will compel the Chinese state into increasingly shrill exhortations to the Chinese populace to observe the proprieties of a Chinese national culture constructed by the state itself. It is thus no wonder that patriotism and nationalism now figure so prominently in the Chinese state’s construction of “China’s culture”, and in their interpretations

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<sup>111</sup> Kang Xiaoguang has argued that China “should promote a modernised Confucianism as a sort of national religion”. “Wenhua minzuzhuyi lungang” (An Outline for Cultural Nationalism), 2003 <[http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk\\_wzdetails.asp?id=2239](http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=2239)> [21 June 2004]. For more on the role that Confucianism might play in the construction of a modern Chinese culture, see Zhonghua Kongzi xuehui, *Jingji quanqiuhua yu minzu wenhua duoyuan fazhan* (Economic Globalisation and the Pluralist Development of National Culture) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003); and Chen Qizhi, *Ruxue yu quanqiuhua* (Confucianism and Globalisation) (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2004).

<sup>112</sup> Jiang Zemin, “Zai qingzhu Zhongguo gongchandang chengli bashi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua”. For development of this idea, see Li Jinquan, “Zhongguo meiti de quanqiuixing he minzuxing”.

<sup>113</sup> For a rather different assessment of the Chinese state’s capacity to regulate and control the domestic context in which transborder media operates, see Y. C. Chin, “The Nation-state in a Globalising Media Environment: China’s Regulatory Policies on Transborder TV Drama Flow”, *Javnost — The Public* 10, no. 4 (Dec. 2003): 75–92.

of “China’s history”.<sup>114</sup> Here, at least, is one dimension of the cultural realm still relatively accessible to the manipulation of the media and educational institutions of the Chinese state, and one which it has in recent years employed with obvious effect to bolster support for various of its foreign policy stances and to reinforce its sagging legitimacy. Even as the cultural realm in China becomes simultaneously more globalised and fragmented, nationalism will remain a tangible theme in China’s cultural mix, and will do so as long as the Chinese populace continues to identify itself, at least at some level, as “Chinese”. But beyond this primal identification with the Chinese nation, China’s culture will become increasingly variegated, more elusive of identification, and further removed from the constructions placed on it by a state deeply enmeshed in the paradox of globalisation.

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<sup>114</sup> For a representative example of the way in which Chinese “history” has been constructed by China’s leaders to bolster nationalism and patriotism, see Jiang Zemin, “Quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi shiye xin jumian”. For further examples, see Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-state by Construction*.

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