
1. Introduction

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A hundred years ago the New Culture Movement swept through China's coastal cities. The dynastical period presided over by emperors with their concubines and officials gave way to a heady period in which ideas such as democracy and science jostled with the legacy of Confucianism. Chinese culture was facing a crisis. Modernize or perish.

Chinese culture did modernize: it assimilated elements of Western Marxism, expurgated elements of Confucianism and under the stewardship of Chairman Mao set its course to liberating a nation. The idea that culture might be an industry was never countenanced: that was something bourgeois, evidence that the capitalists were evil. Cultural workers were the screw and cogs in a machine of progress measured initially by revolution and class struggle and later by economic reforms. When the economic reforms did come in the late 1970s, China emerged from its seclusion from the world. Culture, however, was still insulated from global market forces. This is no longer the case.

All societies need renewal; ways of thinking change, and governments inevitably look to the future. Ultimately renewal takes place when ideas gain purchase among communities, sometimes when governments are overthrown for a better development model, or sometimes they are incubated in creative or innovative milieus. But not all elements of society are willing to countenance destruction of traditions and old ways. In many instances ideas that regenerate societies come from outside national and cultural boundaries. As William Bernstein notes, over the course of history ideas from outside have contributed to economic growth; nations and societies have engaged in trade, exchanging skills and knowledge; at other times cultural values have been imposed through invasion and colonization (Bernstein 2008). The impact of some of these forces has been creative; at other times it has been destructive to cultural values. During the late 20th century, thanks to the rapid spread of information technologies, particularly the Internet, the international flow of ideas accelerated, challenging tradition, changing worldviews and confronting authoritarian regimes.

Much debate has ensued over the past three decades about the value of culture and the sustainability of cultural production in post-industrial societies. In the UK and parts of Europe the policy term 'cultural

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industries' was a timely response to these issues, an attempt to shore up the value of culture, whether by state subvention or commercial entrepreneurship. Other terms followed, namely the 'creative industries', the 'creative economy' and the 'creative class'. The travel of these policy terms internationally reveals much about national and regional development aspirations. In China these terms often manifest in ready-made solutions: policy is fast-tracked from afar and developments mimic international projects. Yet the gentrification of city districts, the commercialization of media, and the revitalization of tourist sites are in many respects a development façade; they have not yet led to Chinese culture achieving its international ambitions. Nonetheless, despite the lack of global recognition so far, momentum is gathering. The international profile achieved by a number of Chinese visual artists, and by some writers and performance artists in recent years, indicates that the nation is beginning to achieve results, albeit in a limited number of cultural fields. Moreover, the professionalization of China's cultural and creative industries owes much to the influx of foreign companies working in China.

In the early 2000s the introduction of 'creative' terminologies (industries, class, economy, cities) found fertile ground in the People's Republic of China. In Western developed economies the use of these terms precipitates debates about media ownership, entrepreneurship, industry sustainability, the casualization of cultural labour, outsourcing of production, and cultural diversity. In these debates, while the terms cultural and creative are often substitutable, there is room for conflicting points of view. For some the emphasis on 'industries' – and by extension commercialization – calls into question what counts as cultural, and for that matter, what can be measured as creative.

In China, however, the distinctions between culture, creativity and industry are more finely inscribed. Culture is directly associated with the hegemony of the state: it is place-specific, laden with historical significance, governed by conventions and micro-managed by censors. Creativity on the other hand is often associated with foreign content imported from Hollywood or from China's near neighbours South Korea and Japan. Creativity according to this account is liberating, offering a window of opportunity to break out of the constraints of state sanctioned culture. The need for indigenous creativity in China has become a mainstream topic in TV talk shows, on talk radio, in newspaper editorials and in numerous conference presentations.

The cultural and creative industries are accorded a prominent role in China's much-heralded shift to a consumption based economic model. Culture is set to become a 'pillar industry' by 2020, an industrial classification formerly reserved for construction, electrical and petrochemical

industries, and auto manufacturing. At the time of writing in late 2015, culture's contribution was 3.4 per cent of GDP. The yardstick of a pillar industry is 5 per cent. Is this new leap forward possible?

To date the most widely cited literature on the cultural and creative industries is attributed to academics and policy consultants resident in the so-called Western 'free world.' Most applications of these 'industry terms' derive from early policy articulations of either the cultural industries (see Garnham 1990) or the New Labour government's creative industries task force in the UK (1990s–2000s); for this reason the terms largely reflect developments in Anglophone nations. The terms have far less traction in the US however, probably due to the dominance of the US entertainment industry complex.

The cultural and creative industries, while widely understood by governments, are sometimes devalued within the humanities; indeed, there is some suggestion that these are policy buzzwords of decades past. In China the terms are widely reported in national news and development reports, particularly as the nation scales up its international ambitions. It is therefore not surprising that Chinese scholars are attempting to present their side of the story to 'foreign' readerships (Li 2011; Xiang 2013; Xiang and Walker 2014). A number of accounts of cultural and creative industries in China, and Asia, have likewise added to the knowledge base (Keane 2007, 2011, 2013; Kong and O'Connor 2009).

International scholarship has advanced both critical and positive accounts of the cultural industries (Garnham 1990; Hesmondhalgh 2013; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; Oakley and O'Connor 2015); the creative industries (Hartley 2005; Hartley et al. 2013; Cunningham 2004; Flew 2012; Moeran and Alacovska 2012; O'Connor 2011; Pratt 2014; Caves 2000); the cultural economy (Scott 2000; du Gay and Pryke 2002); and the creative economy (Kong et al. 2006; Howkins 2002; UNCTAD 2010; Cunningham 2013). In some instances the terms are muddled; that is, there is no obvious difference. Elsewhere scholars have chosen to be specific, taking issue with definitions and industrial sectors.

Some critics of the creative industries point to their 'purely economic imperatives' and their association with neoliberalism (Oakley and O'Connor 2015). The term 'cultural industries' appears to offer a higher moral ground and be more enabling of critique. Yet it's hard to draw a clear line in practice because the terms are interchangeable. The conjunction of these terms in China as 'cultural and creative industries' (or cultural creative industries) is effectively a way to attenuate these ambiguities. Yet when used together the term 'cultural' always precedes 'creative'. Moreover, the official prescription from the Ministry of Culture in Beijing is 'cultural industries' (*wenhua chanye*). It is therefore worth considering

why ‘culture’ (*wenhua*) carries so much weight in policy discourse. Why is culture, previously understood as ‘ideology and related institutions and organizations’, so important to economic transformation that it is accorded the status of a ‘pillar industry’? And why have the cultural industries become a key component in the reform of education curricula as well as a driver of urban renewal over the past several years?

The answers to these questions have both domestic and international implications. In the first instance, the cultural industries (*wenhua chanye*) materialized as a national policy initiative as China’s political leaders looked to shore up the nation’s indigenous cultural resources in the lead up to World Trade Organization (WTO) accession in December 2001. Recognizing that China had grown strong in consumer manufacturing, the call went out in the late 1990s for cultural producers, workers, artists and designers to be more productive. The imposition of an industrial mentality had critics. Culture, some said, pointing to the vulgarity of Hollywood, was too important to be left to the market. Yet the problem was apparent: China needed to adopt a global market perspective if it was to hold back the forces of globalization. Several years later in 2007 as China’s leaders endeavoured to promote a more attractive global image under the auspices of ‘cultural soft power’, a key challenge loomed: why was the nation’s culture, which was symbolic of a great tradition and already building great industrial momentum, failing to attract global recognition?

One solution to making Chinese culture more attractive in the marketplace has been to focus effort on ensuring that Chinese cultural producers absorb foreign ideas, best practice and know-how. The implications of cultural reform have extended across the whole nation, from the fast developing cities to the less developed western regions. The industrialization of culture has proceeded at breakneck speed together with massive government investment in public infrastructure. But will an industrial mentality improve the appeal of art, design and media products in an age when people are increasingly making and disseminating their own culture? Indeed, cultural officials, policy makers, participants, stakeholders and academics are at odds with how the cultural industries ought to function in China. Should cultural workers be free to imagine all possibilities as they do in liberal democracies? How should people’s creativity be encouraged?

Calls for greater autonomy inevitably run up against the problem that these industries are by definition a product of government intervention. Indeed, the manner by which the cultural sector operates in China is sometimes difficult to equate with developments in liberal democracies. On the other hand we can speak of the cultural industries more politically as a development agenda, echoing the broad definition of culture in China: ‘the sum total of all the material and spiritual wealth created by human

beings in the course of the historical development of society' (Cihai 1989: 1731). Knowing what the 'cultural industries' represent on a national policy level in China is simple. They are underwritten by the view that Chinese civilization, and more specifically socialist civilization, supplies the appropriate norms and values for development. As one might expect in a nation that has long held artists to account and closed down opportunities for open expression of ideas, the guidelines for cultural industries remain prescriptive.

THE GENESIS OF THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Before the cultural industries, and indeed the creative industries, scholars would refer to the 'culture industry.' Some still do in fact. In 1944, two left wing émigrés from Fascist Germany published *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, describing how mass media, most typically Hollywood cinema, commercial radio, and advertising conspired to convince people that their wellbeing depends on owning the latest commodity (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). Appearing in print prior to the global spread of broadcasting technologies, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's seminal work drew heavily on Marx's notion of commodity fetishism. Their critique of 'culture industry' remains influential to this day. Scholars often link the Frankfurt School's pessimism towards capitalism with contemporary developments. Without doubt the 'cultural industries', the 'creative industries', and the hybrid formulation 'cultural and creative industries' embrace capitalism and consumerism. Consultants, policy wonks and scholars rush to index development among nations, regions and locales, intent on showing how to increase the 'value-add' of culture in gross domestic product (GDP).

How then do we locate this critique of times past with the current economic and social transformations taking place in China? People in China are encouraged to spend more on cultural goods and services, to consume more in the name of national revival. The Frankfurt School position, on the surface at least, looks reasonable. But it's hard to draw comparisons across different time periods and political regimes. Much of the comparative difficulty is due to the nature of consumer demographics, the sheer scale of markets in China, and the fact that the state intervenes in almost all facets of commercial cultural production. This intervention is far removed from the brand of laissez-faire economics that led to the rise of the 'culture industry' in the US in the 1940s and critiques of neoliberalism today.

Momentum in China had been building during the late 1980s and early

1990s. Although cultural policy reforms in the mid-1980s managed to gradually instil the idea that the market was an effective arbiter of taste, little real autonomy was evident. During his 'southern tour' of the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in February 1992, Deng Xiaoping announced that cultural and media units needed to be weaned off dependence on state subsidy. Signs of burgeoning commercial activity already had emerged in broadcasting and advertising along with consumption of overseas cultural products especially among younger Chinese. Publishing, independent film production and TV serial drama had witnessed moments of creative inspiration, typified by the Beijing hooligan writer Wang Shuo and a group of like-minded script writers and producers associated with him. At the time Deng made his southern tour all cultural production units (*danwei*) were state owned. The lack of commercial appeal of China's cultural sector was evident as audiences looked towards Hong Kong and Taiwanese (*gang-tai*) pop culture (see Gold 1993).

Deng's edict challenged public institutions to restructure and think about profit. Ideologically important institutions such as *The People's Daily* and China Central Television remained protected from market forces. In 1998, a time when China's broadcast media began to undergo further industrial consolidation (*jituanhua*), the Cultural Industries Division of the Ministry of Culture was established and charged with finding ways to turn culture into capital. In 2000, the cultural industries were inserted in the draft of the 10th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (Xiang 2013). In 2001, the year the nation was admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the State Council officially ratified the terminology 'cultural industries'. Joining the WTO was a great achievement for industrial and manufacturing sectors and in the following decade China's trade to the world expanded. In 1978, foreign trade had been worth US\$ 20.6 billion. By 2010 the value was US\$2.97 trillion (Yuan 2014). China had established itself as an industrial power, the world's largest exporter, on the back of an export orientation. 'Made in China' brands were proliferating internationally but at home Chinese culture was struggling to compete with the sophisticated media of East Asia and Hollywood. In 2005, the state media reported an alarming cultural trade deficit.

While the cultural industry had its underpinnings in China during the 1990s among critical intellectuals drawn to the anti-capitalist writings of the Frankfurt School scholars, by the time the term was ratified as national policy it had undergone a transformation. Scholars associated with the 'New Left' found global capitalism an easy target and in this endeavour they received support from international scholars on the left. This critique, however, did not extend to challenging state power in any

overt or meaningful way. By the time the state moved in to legitimize the cultural industries many scholars were ready to follow the lead.

The genesis of the cultural industries coincided with ‘national cultural security’ (*guojia wenhua anquan*), an impassioned slogan aimed at resisting international pressures, mostly from the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA) to prise open cultural sectors. Because of the political origins of the cultural industries, projects that reflect government policy slogans have received, and continue to receive, substantial support in terms of tax benefits, publicity and low interest loans. When the cultural industries idea was incubated in Chinese Communist Party affiliated think tanks, regional governments were quick to realize that considerable economic advantage would accrue if artefacts and sites could be converted into tourism experiences. Regional governments were quick to appreciate how the policy blueprint of the central government could legitimize local real estate developments. Consequently many cities added cultural industry quarters and creative clusters to urban growth strategies (Keane 2011).

For the Chinese Communist Party, repackaging performing and visual arts, media, and tourism/handicraft sectors constituted a unified force against overseas culture, particularly pop culture. The term ‘revitalization’ (*zhenxing*) appeared frequently in cultural policy speeches during the mid-2000s. Despite extensive progress in many areas of media and cultural production post WTO accession, however, it was 2009 before the cultural industries were acknowledged as potential pillar industries (*zhizhu chanye*). The goal of ‘actively developing cultural industries’ appeared for the first time in the central government’s work report that year. On July 22 the executive meeting of the State Council chaired by Premier Wen Jiabao discussed and approved the ‘Cultural Industry Promotion Plan’ as part of the drafting of the 12th Five Year Plan. The Cultural Industry Promotion Plan coincided with a renewed focus on the ‘reform of the cultural system’ (*wenhua tizhi gaige*), namely, how to reform public cultural institutions (*shiye*) to make them more enterprising and copyright compliant. In this ‘revitalization’ *shiye* should seek out ways to become commercial industries (*chanye*) wherever possible; the strongest *chanye* should be encouraged to list publicly.

The political responsibilities of the cultural industries are as evident now as they were a decade earlier. The Ministry of Culture’s official publication outlining the 12th Five Year Plan opens with an interview with Minister Cai Wu. The Minister articulates a national strategy to double the annual revenue from cultural industries from 2010 to 2015. What is not detailed is the actual amount of state finance that goes into supporting these would-be pillar industries (Cai 2012). In a section of the document

entitled ‘give impetus to cultural industries in order to become pillar industries of the national economy’, we note the following wording:

Cultural industries are an important channel for the satisfaction of people’s diverse spiritual needs under the conditions of the socialist market economy; they constitute an important vehicle to bring about development and prosperity of socialist culture; they are the leaders among pillar industries and are strategic emerging industries in the national economy; they are a leading force in giving Chinese culture the impetus ‘go out’; they are an important focal point to strategically adjust the economy as well as a force to transform China’s economic development model. (Cai 2012: 171)

In October 2011, during the 17th Meeting of the Sixth Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party a new strategic plan for cultural reform and development was devised. The so-called ‘strong cultural power’ (*wenhua qiangguo*) strategy echoes national cultural security but emphasizes how Chinese culture will go global (*zou chuqu*). This strategy endorses culture that is in accord with the national identity of China.

What then does this entail? The 12th Five-Year Plan depicts culture as the ‘circulatory system of China’s nationalities, the Chinese people’s spiritual homeland’ (Cai 2012: 6) The strong cultural power discourse builds on this health and wellbeing metaphor, arguing that a ‘healthy’ circulatory system will strengthen China’s cultural sovereignty:

China becoming a cultural power should not be the wishful thinking of an elite few but a common pursuit of all citizens. And just like the circulatory system national cultural strategy should circulate culture to every part of society from a national level down to a regional, business and local level. (Xiang 2013: 77)

The strong cultural nation strategy, like the 12th Five Year Plan, makes frequent use of the term ‘revitalization’ (*zhenxing*). The emphasis on Chinese civilization is evidence that this is an attempt to draw on the past; for instance using Confucius Institutes abroad to disseminate appropriate Chinese cultural values (Xiang 2013: 80). In this model the massive investment in establishing Chinese Central Television (CCTV) channels overseas is predicated on the belief that they will disseminate approved messages, even if they are drains on the Chinese public purse.

In looking for ways to grow China’s cultural (and creative) industries scholars in China accord a great deal of attention to international reports. In particular, the demand for international textbooks on cultural management has precipitated a mini-translation boom. Much of the translated literature is focused on the tangible elements of cultural production such as value chains, marketing and cultivation of talent (*rencai*). Theories and models of urban regeneration, as well as case studies of creative clusters

and creative cities find their way into Chinese university curricula and on to think tank reading lists. Delegations venture abroad to learn about the latest cluster developments while international scholar-consultants visit China, offering Western-style solutions that have limited chance of success due to the institutional complexity of Chinese governance and the effects of *guanxi* (personal networks).

ORGANIZATION OF PART I

The first part of the book is entitled ‘the cultural and creative industries reconsidered.’ The chapters address questions of how culture and creativity coexist as development discourses in China. In the first chapter Zitong Qiu draws on personal experience to explore how – and why – a distinctive ‘Blue Book style’ of presentation became the template for reporting on the cultural industries, displacing a theoretical approach evident among New Left scholars in the early 1990s, one that was overtly critical of globalization and the commercialization of culture. Prior to the late 1990s the term used for cultural industries was *wenhua gongye*, with the focus on labour (*gong*). In due course the default setting became *wenhua chanye*, emphasizing production (*chan*), hence the need to register productivity in data. Qiu’s term ‘remedy paradigm’ aptly describes the propensity for academics to provide measured advice to government. The ‘remedy paradigm’ thus comprises development data, analysis of impediments, followed by recommendations, often extracted from international case studies. The key point here according to Qiu is that scholars are recruited to the cause of ‘cultural development’; the ‘remedy paradigm’ style eschews the kinds of criticism of power one expects in international literature.

The tension between ‘culture’ and ‘creativity’ forms the subject of the chapter by Michael Keane. In China culture occupies the controlling position in the policy formulation ‘cultural creative industries’ (*wenhua chuangyi chanye*), implying that culture regulates creativity. In this chapter Keane draws on Chinese philosophy including *yin-yang* theory and the Confucian classic *The Great Learning* (*daxue*). Keane argues for a complementary conjoined term, creative-cultural industries, anticipating a dialectic in which nothing is ever complete; that is, creativity and culture co-evolve in a process of constant interplay: this interplay is now reflected in online networks and what is now known as the ‘sharing economy’, typified by crowdsourcing, collaborative production and network effects. Whereas the Chinese government’s cultural industries model mandates order – and documents the ordering of successes, international models of innovation and creativity encourage disorder and disruption. More

importantly in respect to China's ambitions to be a cultural power (*wenhua qianguo*), Keane argues that both order and disorder are necessary to build competitive, robust sustainable industries. Creative-cultural industries are therefore the substance of 'digital China', a theme that recurs in several of the later chapters.

Jing Wang's chapter 'The makers are coming' situates this argument within debates around China's innovation system. Often associated with Web culture, the 'Maker Movement' is a global DIY phenomenon, encompassing online collaborating and sharing and the rapid prototyping of new products usually in informal networked communities. Wang's chapter investigates makers' projects that have emerged from below while critiquing the expedient association of the maker with the entrepreneur. Rather she argues that the concept of 'change-maker' is a more appropriate and important solution for China. Her chapter looks at three different models of 'makers as social innovators': innovation challenge contests for problem-solving projects shaped by NGOs and public interest organizations; the ThinkBig Initiative based on youth activism; and Enactus China, the national chapter of an international NGO promoting sustainable growth of communities through smart strategies designed collaboratively by college students, academic mentors, and business leaders.

China is a country where change has come at a rapid pace. Technology it seems is relatively cheap and younger Chinese are 'born digital'. Generational differences therefore are much debated within professions that are understood to rely on creativity. Liboriussen's chapter highlights why the concept of 'generation' is important in China. He argues that the concept is not only used by outside observers but by creatives themselves when they reflect on their practices. Examining the work practices of a number of successful artists and designers the chapter shows how the generational, the technological and the creative intertwine. Those born with computers, so-called 'digital natives', here categorized as 'post-1980s' (*balinghou*), illustrate a greater propensity to use digital tools in comparison to the '70s generation, who are more drawn to analogue tools. In his analysis Liboriussen reflects on the meaning of creativity as a 'travelling concept'.

The chapter by Michael Alexander Ulfstjerne extends this reflection, examining what happens when the discourse of creative and cultural industries arrives in remote destinations, not the larger Chinese coastal cities but the Chinese hinterlands. Using the travels of an iconic Danish sculpture, the 'little mermaid', and its appropriation as a symbol of modernity, Ulfstjerne argues that cultural and creative industries must be understood in the context of the place-specific modality of urban aspirations. Drawing on the case of the Inner Mongolian city of Erdos, sometimes referred to as a 'ghost city', the chapter shows the different ways that the discourse

of cultural industries, municipal economies and private capital intersect in regional urban development. Drawing on several months of ethnography in Erdos, Ulftsjerne suggests that so-called ‘prestige’ or ‘face-projects’ (*mianzi gongcheng, zhengji gongcheng*) are not entirely bereaved of social creativity. Rather than simply lampooning Chinese local governments for their corrupted, superficial and deceptive appropriations of creative industries, Ulftsjerne says that we also need to encompass these urban facelifts in their capacity of managing social relations in a hierarchical system.

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