

Transnational Cultures

Cultural Exchanges in the Global South and the Making of the Post-WWII World Order

An International Workshop

14-15 June, 2019

Workshop Programme

Friday 14 June

Upper Lounge, Reed Hall, University of Exeter (Streatham Campus)

9:30-10:00 – Arrival Coffee/Tea

10:00-12:30 – Roundtable Discussion: *Rethinking Ideas of the Global and of the World Order*

Chair: Dario Castiglione (University of Exeter)

Introduced by Zhiguang Yin (University of Exeter)

(Participants: Regenia Gagnier, Exeter; Guangyi Li, Chongqing University; Nini Pan, China Eastern Normal University; Gregorio Bettizza, Exeter; Yanan Song, SOAS London; Chuchu Zhang, Fudan University, Xuan Zhao, Central Minzu University)

12:30-13:30 – Lunch (Reed Hall)

14:00-15:00

Topic 1: The Political Connotation of Culture and Cultural Exchanges

Chair: Regenia Gagnier

Introduced by Tom Harper (University of Surrey) and Nini Pan (East China Normal University)

15:00-16:00

Topic 2: Decolonisation and Cultural Imperialism

Chair: Zhiguang Yin

Introduced by Treasa De Loughry (University of Exeter) and Anton Harder (Nottingham University)

16:00-16:30 – Coffee/Tea Break

16:30-17:30

Topic 3: Exchange of Cultural Products within the Global South

Chair: Treasa De Loughry

Introduced by Katie Brown (University of Exeter) and Guangyi Li and Taiqi Zhang (Chongqing University)

19:00

Dinner (Meet at the lobby of the Rougemont Hotel)

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<http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/modernlanguages/research/centres/globalchina/>

Saturday 15 June

Forum Seminar Room 06, University of Exeter (Streatham Campus)

10:00-10:30 - Arrival Coffee/Tea

10:30-11:30

Topic 4: Cultural Diplomacy from non-Western Perspectives

Chair: Anton Harder

Introduced by Xin Liu (University of Central Lancashire) and Jodie Yuzhou Sun (University of Oxford)

11:30-12:30

Topic 5: Imaginations of the World Order

Chair: Jodie Yuzhou Sun

Introduced by Xuan Zhao (Central Minzu University) and Chuchu Zhang (Fudan University)

12:30-14:00 – Lunch (working lunch outside Seminar Room 06)

14:00-15:00

Closing Roundtable: Past, Present and Future of the Global South

Chair: Zhiguang Yin

The workshop is funded by UK-China Humanities Alliance and the College of Humanities at the University of Exeter.

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Participants

Tom Harper, University of Surrey, t.harper@surrey.ac.uk

Maoism without Maoism: China's African Engagement and the Roots of the Post-Colonial and Post-Cold War Order

China's engagement with the African states has been subject to a significant degree of attention as one of the major examples of Chinese foreign policy outside of Asia. These policies have often been depicted as either being a neo-imperial venture or being little more than bribing corrupt African governments with Chinese money. Such images often overlook the roots of Chinese engagement with the continent, which came with China's assistance to the anti-colonial movements in the African states as part of China's attempts to spread the Maoist doctrine to the post-colonial world in competition with the Soviet Union to become the vanguard of communism in the Third World. These experiences have played a notable role in shaping China's relationship with the African states as well as illustrating the deep roots of this relationship.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the role that China's experiences in Africa during the period of post-war decolonisation has played in China's post-Cold War foreign policy in the developing world. This has been an often overlooked aspect of China's African policies which has been instrumental in cementing Chinese influence in the African states as well as granting China an advantage that few other external actors in the continent have. This has become increasingly notable as China deploys the foreign policy blueprint developed in Africa to the wider world. In addition, the Maoist doctrine once promoted by China has also retained a notable degree of influence on both Chinese foreign policy and the developing world, with Mao's strategies for revolution and guerrilla warfare continuing to be influential despite the abandonment of its ideological tenets. It is China's engagement with the African states and Mao's strategies that symbolise China's contribution to the shaping of the post-colonial world during the Cold War and beyond it.



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Plants in the Free Trade Garden': US Foreign Policy and Food Aid in South East Asia
During the Cold War

Dr Anton Harder, Nottingham University, Anton.harder@nottingham.ac.uk

Compradors, Neo-Colonialism and Transnational Class Struggle: Algeria, India and Beijing's Visions of the Third World, 1953-1963

While international historians of the Cold War increasingly balance traditional diplomacy with the impact of transnational connections, it is apparent that one major diplomatic actor of the period saw the world in acutely transnational terms. This paper argues that Maoist China's emphasis on the transnational function of class made it fundamentally sceptical of the privileged status of the nation-state. In the late 1950s, Beijing's sense of a growing matrix of transnational class alliances and antagonisms prompted the Chinese communists to seek closer ties with revolutionary liberation movements like the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). Beijing retreated from its post-Korean War phase of moderate diplomacy when it had eschewed support for revolution abroad under the rhetoric of the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence'. Support for the FLN severely strained Beijing's major diplomatic relationships with Moscow and New Delhi, two actors who greatly valued Chinese moderation.

This paper traces the arc of interactions between the communist Chinese, and the FLN revolutionaries, and the newly post-colonial Algeria, and will argue that, just as Beijing exaggerated the revolutionary opportunities of Indian domestic politics, and chose to apply diplomatic pressure on New Delhi in order to catalyse that potential, so did Beijing's engagement with the FLN and Algeria hinge upon class analysis. This case study highlights how Beijing's class-based analysis drove its changing posture towards the third world in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Furthermore, by exploring how the communist Chinese married their own class category of the 'comprador capitalist' with the emerging third world notion of 'neo-colonialism', this paper demonstrates that the PRC's staunch commitment to anti-imperialism can only be understood in terms of its perception of the transnational function of class forces. Finally, this class obsession explains the curious difficulty that Beijing faced in maintaining cooperative relations with many post-colonial nations.



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Exchange of cultural products from/to Latin America

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“Eating a ‘Capitalist Sugar-coated Bullet’ and Contribute to socialism”: How the affinity to Japanese culture lead to a unique “nationalist identity” among Chinese “interest-groups”

This paper takes an ethnographic work on the political identity and expression of China’s young “interest-groups” who rely on Japanese pop-and-sub-culture for entertainment and even social networking. Since at the national level, Japanese governmental sectors and brains expects an “independent thinking” of these young people with affinity to Japan, while their counterparts in China worry about its influence on nationalism and history cognition, it’s not strange that such interest groups’ potential political inclination is quite sensitive for political and intellectual elite. Beyond repeating the “strong” transmission and influence of Japanese pop-and-sub-culture globally, this paper tries to focus on the subjectivity of such youth’s groups to create their identity and style of expression -- sometimes they are forced to say while sometimes voluntarily. This research finds an interesting phenomenon that in many occasions, in-depth experiences of Japanese pop-and-sub-culture made a crucial resource for creation of a strong “nationalist and patriotic identity”. And even more interesting is, such “identity” is also different in details from that promoted by the state. This paper then tries to analyze on this anomalous phenomenon. My point is that it’s not a direct relationship between the strong culture and youth receiving it with a unilateral “channel” between them. Instead of this impression, in practice, there is a kind of “network” mediating the “strong” culture and “weak” young recipients, and make the latter possible to have subjectivity. This “network” is consisted of multiple and even conflicting powers, ideas and accidents, which generate chemical reactions with one another, while mediating the contents of the strong culture and the subjectivity of young “interest-groups”. My case study discusses specifically on how a “unique” nationalist identity is formed from such a process.

Cultural Diplomacy from Non-Western Perspectives

While inspired and stimulated by the growing literature about China's cultural diplomacy, this paper discusses the limitations of the mainstream theoretical framework of 'soft power': this West-centric concept has applied the same lens to look at China as other Western countries and failed to recognize the unequal power positions associated with culture and ideology, as it lacks a historical perspective in locating the 'root cause' of the unique challenges faced by China, which is a complication co-produced by vestiges of Orientalism, Western cultural hegemony and the power-knowledge nexus; nor does it engage with China's domestic dimension where nationalism is a driving force to launch cultural diplomacy that converges state nationalism and popular nationalism. The binary view of cultures and values in the soft power framework also defies the fundamental vision of cultural diplomacy, which is not a zero-sum game to win over hearts and minds, but a plus sum game of nurturing mutual understanding and respect between cultures.

An alternative analytical framework drawing on the tripartite theories of Orientalism, cultural hegemony and nationalism is then constructed to reveal a three-dimensional picture of an uneven global cultural terrain that is both imbalanced and hierarchical at each interface. It offers a more comprehensive perspective that allows us to see a much more sophisticated discourse as both the domestic and international contexts have historical legacies deeply ingrained. After elaborating the cultural face, political face and changing face of the Chinese nationalism, I argue there is also an emergent trajectory along three Ps in the evolving goals of China's cultural diplomacy: from changing *Perception*, to improving *Position*, then to enhancing *Power*.

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'Militant Africa' in the Sino-Zambian Cultural Exchanges in the 1960s and the 1970s

Postcolonial Zambian history has been primarily understood through the prism of the regional context, which has arguably been distorted by a strong focus on the country's role in supporting Southern African liberation movements. China-Zambia relations are, as a result, commonly constructed as grand narratives of 'all-weather friendship' designed to support regional liberation, exemplified by the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia railway. Cultural and social spheres, expressed in the form of 'people-to-people diplomacy', constituted important elements of China-Zambia relations in the 1960s and the 1970s. As part of public diplomacy, the diplomatic exchanges of citizens complement traditional and formal diplomacy. Many cultural delegations, composed of Chinese artists, doctors and athletes, visited Zambia, generating attention and debates both in the parliament and the press.

Using archives and newspapers from both Zambia and China, this paper makes a tentative effort to explore the production, distribution and reception of the 'militant' image of Africa in the Sino-Zambian cultural exchanges through examples such as song and dance troupes. On the one hand, these visits encompassed cultural representations of Mao's China as 'revolutionary', 'brotherly', and at times 'professional'; on the other hand, these individual experiences sometimes revealed or generated tensions and contradictions that underlay state relations. It argues that state propaganda of China-Zambia brotherhood did not lead to any straightforward sharing of views between Chinese and Zambians in reality. Cultural diplomacy or people-to-people diplomacy was arguably a more significant element of China-Zambia relations in revealing if not mitigating such estrangement.

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Mr Taiqi Zhang, Chongqing University

The Imagination of World in Chinese Science Fiction at the Turn of 1970s/1980s

At the turn of 1970s/1980s, in the complex political and intellectual climate of early post-Mao era, Chinese science fiction exhibited imaginations of world very unlike before. On the one hand, because of Cold War geopolitics, Chinese science fiction depicted Soviet Union as a despicable hegemony. On the other hand, the United States as well as other capitalist countries, though still the ideological opposite, were imagined diversely. Some writers had rather positive visions of the United States and the West. Aside from the influence of improving Sino-American relationship since the late 1970s, the myth of “enlightenment” and “modern” embraced by Chinese intelligentsia played an important role in the emergence of such images. Some other writers drew a prosperous while depulsive West. Their ambiguous attitude towards the West, admiring “modernization” while disapproving western/capitalist modernity, echoed the persistent anxiety about the road to modern society since the early twentieth century. “Columbus from America” (1979) and Offspring of Mars (1984), as two representative works, demonstrated the remaining consciousness of the short twentieth century in the depoliticized 1980s and consequent confusion and conflict.

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China's New Role in the Middle East: An Elite Debate

Along with China's growing presence and interests in the Middle East, Beijing finds it increasingly challenging sitting on the sidelines of the region's conflicts and tensions, and has called for establishing a new role in the Middle East. By adopting content analysis to examine 53 articles written by Chinese elites, this research analyzes how Chinese elites understand the concept of China's new role in the Middle East. It argues that the concept is still under heated debate concerning to what extent and in which aspects China should change the policy from non-interference and non-involvement in Middle Eastern conflicts, whether China should identify itself as an order participant or order shaper, and which countries China should attach most importance to when conducting role adjustment in the region. The study finds that when formulating foreign policy towards the Middle East, the Chinese elites oscillates between prioritizing economic interests and geopolitical concerns. This argument is tested by using the ordinary least squares model. The study contends that the new role is too vague to be institutionalized at this stage, which reflects China's dilemma between expanding its political influence in the Middle East's rule-setting, and trying to keep the risk-aversion diplomacy by not turning any Middle Eastern country or major international player in the region into a hostile force.



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Border Assemblage: Chinese Ports in the post-Cold War Era with Horgos as an Example