

Globalization, Asian Modernity, Values, and Chinese Civil Society

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Abstract: This paper discusses five major sets of developments that have had a profound relationship to intercultural, cross-cultural, international, and global communication: (1) globalism, globalization and culture universals; (2) the role of eastern and western values; (3) traditional and modernizing high technological society in Eastern Asia, especially in China; (4) international and global media theories; and (5) the Chinese civil society and China century. [China Media Research. 2012; 8(2): 18-25]

Keywords: Asian Modernity, Asian Values, Chinese Civil Society, Globalization, International and Global Media Theories

Globalism, Globalization, and Cultural Universals

We are well aware through the concept of **globalism** and the actual process of **globalization** that a new world order has begun to emerge in the recent past several decades, much different than international relations experts might have predicted even in the mid-1980s. *The Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999) defines globalism as “the belief that political policies should take world-wide issues into account before focusing on national or state concerns, or the advocacy of this concept: and **globalization** as “the process by which social institutions become adopted on a global scale” or “the process by which a business or company becomes international or starts operating at the international level.” From this merger, we have the concept of **glocalization** and the mantra: “Think globally; act locally.” Evelin Lindner proposes: “A global culture and global institutions of social and societal cooperation can create meaningful life on planet Earth.... We need to seek optimization of balance within each individual’s life, as one integrated life, embedded in one united global community.... Today, it takes a decent global society to give humankind a future” (2010, p. 141). As an optimist for a positively connected and interdependent global society, Lindner argues: “Global brotherhood and sisterhood, global connectedness, cohesion, mutuality, solidarity, and loving care for our human family and its habitat are desperately needed. In Europe, the term ‘social cohesion’ is preferred, while in Asia, the phrase ‘the harmonious society’ is more commonly used. Whatever the phrasing, the meaning behind the words is solidarity among all of humankind for the common good” (p. xvii).

William R. Slomanson, an international relations expert, says that none of them might have imagined in the mid-1980s that by the end of the decade the Soviet Union would begin to collapse, the wall separating East and West Germany would fall, the two Germanys would reunite, Apartheid would begin to end in South Africa, or that China would become a more and more important world power (2000). Samuel P. Huntington in his 1996

book, *The Clash of Civilizations: and The Remaking of World Order*, asks whether the Judao/Christian West and the Muslim Middle East and North African nations and cultures and the Asian Confucian/ Buddhist/ Hindu cultures are fundamentally different and at odds with each other. Can we engage in a “dialogue of civilizations?” If China is a civilization state more than a nation state, as Jacques Martin postulates, it is an important intercultural issue for China and for other states to pursue, as well as for individuals interacting with Chinese citizens and the reverse. Martin proposes, “It is this civilizational dimension which gives China its special and unique character” (2009, p. 374). He argues that “Previously, the US was regarded as the overwhelming agent and beneficiary of globalization. Now the main beneficiary is perceived to be East Asia and especially China” (p. 352). In this case, we may have to consider **globalization**, not as moving Asians towards westernization, but increasingly as the West moving more toward East Asia and China. **Globalization** always includes the geographical movement across cultures of goods, currency, people, and ideas. **Migration** is one of the most important aspects of **globalization** from one country to another or in China with more than 100 million migrating from the rural areas to and from the urban areas. A significant problem for many of these migrant workers, besides a low economic and educational level, is the *hukou* system, but some provinces and cities are starting to ease these restrictions on their permanent or semi-permanent residency situation, which affects not only the workers, but also their children’s quality of education, and thus as future contributing citizens in a Chinese civil society.

Does **globalization** bring us closer together as a “global village” as Marshall McLuhan, Canadian guru of communication, asked in the 1960s and early 1970s (1964 & 1970), or does it move us ever farther apart, as the Australian newspaper and magazine entrepreneur Rupert Murdoch envisions with a “global city?” A village brings people together where all of the villagers

know each other, often very well, and may collectively be opposed to **cultural change**, but it is often intrusive on one's privacy. A city allows for greater anonymity, where people do not know each other, but where **cultural change** is constant, often nonharmonious and unstable. In China, there are many streets that act as a type of close knit village, but when residents leave it to enter the city, their lives are constantly organized in the larger and broader society. Men and women wearing pajamas on the "village within the city" streets, as happens also in Japan and Korea, must give way to regular street clothing when they go even blocks away in the city.

There are 200+ cities in the world now with more than 5 million residents. The China International Urbanization Development Strategy Research Committee selected the following Chinese cities as China's top developing cities for 2009: Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Chengdu, Nanjing, Fuzhou, Changsha, and Ji'nan, all which have more than 6 million inhabitants except Fuzhou (*GlobalTimes*, 2009: November 30). In contrast, the US with its 366 million population has only four cities with more than 2 million residents: New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston (US Census Bureau, 2000). Which society is more likely to fit the pattern of global cities, China or the United States? Although there are more than 90 universities in Beijing alone, and particularly located in the Haidian District, many major and famous American universities are comparatively in quite small cities or towns.

The post WWII anthropologist George Murdock stressed that certain **cultural traits** are common to all societies, such as the cycle of life: birth, adolescence, youth, courtship, mating, maturity, old age, and death as **cultural universals**. He and other similarly oriented anthropologists also noted other universals, such as bodily care, bodily ornaments (especially for women), male and female bodily differences, cleanliness, hygiene, modesty, sexual customs and restrictions, relations with others in the community, including local governance, kinship, cooperative labor, community organization, education, law, status differentiation, and customs relating to a belief in the supernatural or a higher power and religious power (Murdock, 1945).

The **theory of cultural universals** offers important intercultural and cross-cultural communication insights. However, Clifford Geertz warns that having identified such concepts as **cultural universals**, we must test the most significant ones which are thoroughly grounded in particular biological, sociological, or psychological processes, empirically across cultures and cross-culturally. He believes that saying that all people have a religious impulse (and we are aware that most Chinese do not recognize such an impulse), or have reasonably similar views on mating or marriage, or the concept that all people have a common interest in private property,

for example, then "the question still remains whether such universals should be taken as the central elements in the definition of man [and woman], whether a lowest common denominator of humanity is what we want anyway.... In short, we need to look for systematic relationships among diverse phenomena, not for substantive identities among similar ones" (1973, pp. 39-40).

Eastern and Western Values

Without briefly considering the basis of Eastern and Western values broadly in their ancient and contemporary context, it is difficult to understand the pull between tradition and modernity in Confucian societies such as China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia versus western Graeco/Roman, Judao/Christian societies. Robert T. Oliver, in his book, *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China* (1971), argues: "For centuries, the 'Confucian industry' of China has matched the 'Shakespearean industry' of Anglo-American scholarship in its production of books, lectures, and educational programs. Nowhere has any political apparatus been more influential than the dominance in Chinese life and politics by the prescription of Confucianism. No other culture has been so strongly marked by the characteristics of so unsystematic a philosophical system.... Confucius resolutely kept his attention devoted to the practical problems of the world as he observed it" (1971, p. 86). Oliver said that "what Confucius sought above all was a society in which harmony would prevail because propriety and loyalty would be practiced by the rulers and the people.... This philosophy was cogent, clear, consistent, and practical" (1971, p. 123). Oliver concluded his thoughts about Confucius on harmony and justice: "The focus of his inquiry was upon effective means of adjusting people to ideas, ideas to people, and people to people. This was the humanist way, as he conceived it" (p. 144). Basically, Confucius was concerned about the social order, based on love for one's kind and family, authority, social stability and harmony: "Goodness: in private life, courteous; in public life, diligence; in relationships, loyal." *The Analects* are well known as the core of contemporary Chinese culture even today, with the brief exception of the anti-Confucian campaign initiated by Madame Mao during the latter period of the Great Cultural Revolution.

Among the Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, there was an ongoing debate about whether the ultimate values were truth, wisdom, goodness, and justice, leading toward the good life from the perspective of Plato, or from the point of view of Aristotle, his student, whether these values must be complemented by happiness, then leading to the good life. Socrates, the main protagonist in Plato's dialogues,

always modestly, but firmly, identified with the idea of what a philosopher should be, an individual with wisdom, truth, and a sense of justice. Plato argued that dialectical reasoning and logic were far superior to the monological persuasion of an individual speaker. In a more practical way, Aristotle called for the speaker to have qualities of *ethos* (credibility, knowledge, and good will for the audience), *logos* (reasoned logic) and *pathos* (appropriate emotional appeals for the audience). Where Plato compared argument with dialectic having the favored place over rhetoric philosophically, Aristotle identified dialectic as the counterpoint of politics—thus promoting happiness and movement for the community toward the good life. The Greek teachers of rhetoric saw themselves as guiding young Greek male citizens to become active members of the civil society and able to argue directly, forcefully, and persuasively their well-considered points of view, in contrast to the Confucian hierarchical, authoritarian based reasoning—modeling justice and goodness by the leaders, and thereby naturally but implicitly encouraging the populace to follow. While the Confucian “golden mean” was negative (“Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.”) the Western prescription was positive (“Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.”) Later, in Jesus Christ’s “sermon on the mount,” he offered both, a set of positives, “Blessed are the...” and a set of negatives, “Woe unto them that...”

In terms of the comparison of Eastern and Western Values, K.S. Sitaram (1995) identifies two primary values and value orientations: Eastern responsibility vs. Western individuality. He regards many easterners as seeing themselves collectively, with modest respect for responsibility, authority, benevolence, and propriety for their groups and others as well as loving care for family members, while westerners see themselves first as individuals which leads to the importance of values such as competitiveness, aggressiveness, challenges to authority, public opinion polls, political differences, court-protected individual rights, success, high personal earnings, private property, personal identity, self-centeredness, and ethnocentrism. Prosser (1978) would challenge that those which are negative aspects should not be called values; instead I call them drives. To be more specific, Sitaram lists the following contrasting values and goals in Asian and western cultures. In Asian culture, he believes that the key values are authoritarianism [authoritarian consensus], brotherhood, collective responsibilities, education, gratefulness, loyalty, respect for elders, and hospitality. While in western culture, the primary values are human dignity, individuality, firstness, frankness, directness, punctuality as well as respect for youth. According to his illustration, the following are key values stressed in the Eastern cultures. Naturally, culture is not static, and

so some of these characteristics also change as the cultures evolve. What Sitaram saw as clear when he was writing *Communication and Culture: A World View* in 1995 may already have changed currently.

Authoritarianism [authoritarian consensus]: a primary value in Asian, African, and Middle Eastern cultures. Eastern societies in their respect for authority have established a set of hierarchical systems. For instance, birth may predict status in the Hindu caste system; and Confucianism underscores hierarchical order as well.

Brotherhood: a value cherished by Confucianism as well as Islam. Chinese culture speaks highly of brotherhood with many young Chinese calling their cousins brothers and sisters, and it is the same case in Islam. According to the *Qur’an* in Islam, all Muslims are brothers but this does not always extend to out-groups or non Muslims.

Collective responsibility: It is the Hindus’ and Buddhists’ highest value, which is also cherished broadly in Chinese culture.

Cooperation: Qu’ran-value of brotherhood results in cooperation (and sometimes Jihad) among all Muslims. It is also a primary value in Chinese culture, though this may be changing as Chinese become more individualistic and competitive.

Education: Eastern cultures place high priority on education and show great respect for teachers. According to the Sanskrit saying: “The teacher is god.” Chinese and Japanese culture values education as well. Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping re-established “Teachers’ Day” annually on September 10, as during the Cultural Revolution, young Red Guards had the authority to denounce their teachers, make them wear dunce hats, and treat them harshly.

Gratefulness and loyalty: It is an Eastern and long-lasting value. Loyalty is especially expected for members of one’s family or in-group.

Hospitality: To some extent, the guest is god in Eastern sacred books. For instance, in Hindu, Buddhist, and modern Han weddings; the hosts serve the best food to guests.

Respect for elders: Both African and Asian cultures hold the values of ancestor worship; showing respect and caring for the elderly. In Korea and Japan, the eldest son has the responsibility to honor the ancestors. In China, “Tomb Sweeping Day” has been made an annual holiday period.

Sacredness of the land: In the Hindus’ eyes, “The sacred cow is like the mother who nurses her children.” Taoists also hold the view of earth as mother.

Sitaram contrasts the key values underscored in the western culture as **human dignity, individuality, firstness, directness and respect for youth.**

Human dignity: a basic concept in the UN Charter, and equality among persons is highly valued in

western culture. Team-building now starts among kindergarten children and develops throughout their entire education.

Individuality: a clear western value which stresses achievement, success, winning, and competition. Robert Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone*, stresses this sometimes unhealthy sense of individuality and personal superiority.

"Firstness:" Westerners generally want to be first. For instance, the Soviet Sputnik was a great shock to US in 1957. (First to land on the moon, to make an auto, to fly a plane.) (*Guinness Book of World Records*.)

Frankness and directness: Most western people prefer the direct way of speech. Particularly, Americans like frank and direct expressions instead of vagueness or ambiguity in communication. Many western leaders announce: "I mean what I say, and I say what I mean." When Americans become more easternized, this trait diminishes.

Respect for youth: Western cultures are youth-oriented. The value of youth is highly appreciated. In the Asian societies, classrooms are teacher-oriented, whereas in the American classrooms, they are much more likely to be student-oriented.

Culture, Technology and Modernity

Tom Bruneau, speaking at the 2007 CAFIC conference in Harbin, reasons that "throughout the world in traditional societies, there is a yearning for a paradise, a place of peace, of rest, a place where there is no conflict, only joy, bliss, and stillness without tension, a great harmony at last... All religions harbor images of harmony, constructed in 'sacred places' as a characteristic of mind, or a transcendental consciousness"(Bruneau, 2007). However, China is well known for its four ancient, but even then modernizing, technological inventions: the compass, gunpowder, papermaking, and clay printing techniques. All of them, plus mechanics, hydraulics, and applied mathematics had a major impact on early Chinese traditional culture (Deng, 2005).

The traditional society, nonetheless, remains static in time and place and tends to most often culturally accept submission to authority, filial piety, conservatism, fatalism, pessimism, and a patriarchal society, with authoritarian consensus, or a potentially multicultural and harmonious integration, such as Asian societies like Singapore and Malaysia, while the modernizing society moves, often only gradually, toward egalitarianism and open mindedness, gender equality, social isolation, individualism, self reliance, optimism and new assertiveness. Asia's future may include an integration of an individualistic and collectivistic society, with an increasingly modern scientific education which leads to western cognitive intelligence and rationality, identity as global citizens

and international stakeholders, and more hybrid identities. The new cross-cultural prism may be Asians in western dress and customs, and westerners in traditional Asian dress and customs (Martin, 2009).

What is the role of technology in shaping, changing, or modernizing our cultures? Is the technological global society helpful to the continuation of the best human cultural values, or a detriment? Will new technologies come out of East Asia or China? How will China's rapid modernization complement or conflict with its traditional values? Will it lead to cooperation or competition and conflict with the already technological societies in the West? Jules Henry, in his *Culture Against Man* (1963), Jacques Ellul in *The Technological Society* (1964), and B. F. Skinner, in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971), were all "cultural determinists" in the period of the American, Chinese and European 1960s and 1970s cultural revolutions. In every cultural generation and time, the irreversibility of technical progress and its geometric cultural diffusion and expansion across space, according to Henry, Ellul, and Skinner, offer the conclusion that technology in modern life is so pervasive that it has produced a global society in which human culture has become the subject rather than the master over technology. Henry (1963) has argued that in contemporary society, the technological society is a driven one, seeking to become expansive, competitive, individualistic, consuming and achievement-oriented, all cultural factors that are usually subscribed to westernization and even global Americanization. Although some value theorists such as Shalom Schwartz include such drives among universal values, it would seem that they are the antithesis of universal values such as those espoused by the ancient Greeks of truth, wisdom, happiness and the good life or by Confucius of benevolence, ritual, right thinking, and harmony.

China has been moving toward a significant role as an international stake-holder since 2000. Both Presidents Obama and Hu are seeking a closer collaboration on many issues following Hu's 2011 State Visit to the US. Chinese industry and commerce have moved beyond Germany and Japan as an exporter and now sells more autos than the US, and owns a large proportion of American debt, several trillion dollars. Among other factors, this debt ratio requires both China and the US to establish more of a partnering and ongoing cooperative relationship than one which sees the other side as a threat ("the China Threat" for Americans, and "the America threat" for Chinese). China is moving more and more close to good economic and political relationships with the European Union, and now has major economic and political influence in many African, Asian, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries.

In an American 2009 poll by the Pew Research Center, 44% of those polled said that China is now the

top world economic power while only 27% felt that the US remains the top economic power, 49% wanted the American government to “mind its own business internationally,” indicating that many in the US public are growing more isolationist; 53% identified China’s emerging economic strength as posing rising competition for the US, and 63% still saw the US as the leading military power (English People’s Daily Online, 2009: December 4). Arthur Kroeber, Managing Director of GaveKal-Dragonomics, an economic research firm in Beijing, writes in the April 11, 2010 Washington Post that Americans tend to hold five easily disproven myths about the Chinese economy: (1) China will quickly overtake the United States as the world’s most powerful economy. (2) China’s vast holdings of US treasury bonds means it can hold Washington hostage in economic negotiations. (3) Letting its currency grow in value is the most important thing China can do to reduce its trade surplus. (4) China’s hunger for resources is sucking the world dry and making major contributions to global warming. (5) China’s economy has grown mainly through the cruel exploitation of its cheap labor.

In fact, however, with the rising educated middle class in China and the largest number of college and university students in the world, China may well reach President Hu Jintao’s goal of an “all round moderately prosperous” China by 2020, or even more likely sooner. The Chinese Ministry of Education has designated nine Chinese universities as China’s C 9 League most elite universities: Peking University, Tsinghua University, Nanjing University, Zhejiang University, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Harbin Institute of Technology, Xi’an Jiaotong University, and China University of Technology, but there is still some distance for Chinese universities to match those of the broad quality of the US universities, as witnessed by the fact that there are now more than 100,000 Chinese students studying in US universities including more and more Chinese undergraduates. About 40% of these talents will return to China soon after their American (or other foreign education) depending on their opportunities for employment overseas. However, the best US and UK universities are now suffering major budget cuts, as a result of the 2007-2009 world recession. This means in an interesting way, that the American and British universities are also depending on Chinese student tuition of students who pay higher fees to help sustain them in a period of economic austerity. This current exceptional economic problem and conservative demands in the US and UK to slash spending in many areas, including education, may accelerate the rapid rise of Chinese universities, many of which, as Tsinghua University claims for itself are “dedicated to academic excellence, the wellbeing of Chinese society, and to global development.” Such

global development, now occurring under Chinese auspices in many less developed countries, depends greatly on well-educated Chinese scientists and engineers. When fifteen year old students in Shanghai ranked first on the most recent PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests in reading, math, and science among more than sixty countries, the UK students were 24th in reading, 28th in math, and 16th in science while American fifteen-year old students also were far behind: 17th in reading, 30th in math, and 23rd in sciences, President Obama called it a “Sputnik moment” reminiscent of the 1957 Soviet Sputnik launch which energized the US to catch up to the Soviet youth in math and science.

One of the most interesting recent western books about Chinese culture is Jacques Martin’s *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (2009) in which he argues:

Understanding China will be one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century....First, China is not really a nation-state in the traditional sense of the term but a civilization-state.... Second, China is increasingly likely to conceive of its relationship with East Asia in terms of a tributary-state, rather than nation-state system....Third, there is a distinctively Chinese attitude toward race and ethnicity. The Han Chinese see themselves as a single race....Fourth, China operates, and will continue to operate, on a quite different continental canvas than other states. There are four other states that might be described as continental in scale [the United States, Australia, Brazil and India].... Chinese modernity will come continental-sized, in terms of *both* population and physical size.... Fifth, the nature of the Chinese policy is highly specific....the dynastic state was replaced not by Western style popular sovereignty but by state sovereignty.... Sixth, Chinese modernity, like other East Asian modernities, is distinguished by the speed of the country’s transformation.... Seventh, since 1949 China has been ruled by a Communist regime.... Eighth, China will, for several decades to come, combine the characteristics of both a developed and a developing country.... In the light of these ... characteristics, it is clear that Chinese modernity will be very different from Western modernity, and that China will transform the world far more fundamentally than any other global power in the last two centuries. (p. 417)

Martin suggests **that modernity** in East Asia and the West can be measured by several different characteristics: **language, the body, food, power, and politics**. In Japan, despite years of learning English, the

level of English is rather low; in India, English is one of 15 official languages and a typical school language; in Singapore and Hong Kong, where Chinese ethnicity is prevalent, the official language for schools at a certain level is English; and although English has not replaced Mandarin on the Chinese mainland, English is now the elite second language. However, Martin proposes that the body, including especially skin color and style of dress, offers a very strong tilt toward a desire for Western white or light skin, and except in Japan to some extent among women and more directly in India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh, the style of dress is distinctly Westernized. In terms of Westernized food in East Asia, the total of Western fast food chains is growing consistently, but still represents only a small percentage of fast food restaurants, with KFC having 2,200 restaurants, McDonalds having 950 restaurants in China and 3, 500 in Japan in 2009. However, indigenous restaurants, including Asian fast food restaurants, such as the Yum franchises, still are the overwhelming food choice for most Asian residents. At the same time, he notes that in China almost all those living in rural areas and migrants to the cities eat in Chinese restaurants. Martin quotes K. C. Chang's 1977 book *Food in Chinese Culture*, in which he says: "The importance of food in understanding human culture lies precisely in its infinite variability—variability that is not essential for species survival" (1977, p. 57). Martin states that in terms of power in Western and East Asian societies, there is a profound difference; in the West, people are driven by a search for an individual autonomy, identity and utilitarian government, but in East Asia, whether Confucian-based North-East Asia or in South-East Asia, the key goal of individuals is to be a part of group identity from which they find security and meaning, with a separation of governmental power and group responsibilities. In Confucian societies like mainland China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam, Martin maintains that generally the family is the basis of society, and by extension, the nation itself. Thus both stability and harmony are of great importance to these Asian societies.

Martin draws two general conclusions about East Asian modernity: "First, if the impact of Westernization is limited, it follows that these societies—and their modernities—remain individual and distinctive, rooted in and shaped by their own histories and culture. It also follows that their modernization has depended not simply or even mainly upon borrowing from the West, but on their ability to transform and modernize themselves. "Second," he notes, "if the process of modernization is simply a transplant then it cannot succeed. A people must believe that modernity is theirs in order for it to take root and flourish" (p.137). In terms of China, we can then surmise from Martin's arguments that **Chinese modernization**, while borrowing from the West is useful, it must be with "Chinese characteristics"

as Deng Xiaoping articulated: "It doesn't matter if it is a black cat or a white cat, as long as it catches mice."

International and Global Media Theories

In contrast to the cross-cultural national characteristics or dimensions, as are suggested in the studies of Geert Hofstede, when we discuss international and global communication, Thomas L. McPhail(2010), in his book, *Global Communication* defines it as referring "to the cultural, economic, political, social, and technical analysis of communication and media patterns and effects across and between nation-states. International communication focuses more on global aspects of media and communication systems and technologies and, as a result, less on local or even national aspects or issues" (p. 2). McPhail believes that "What is significant, then, is that international communication is no longer solely focused on the role of the print press and the newsgathering habits of the international news agencies, such as AP or Reuters. It is growing to encompass a broad range of issues that arose from the emergence of global broadcasting, global advertising, and the global economy" (p.34).

Noting a number of critical issues relating to international communication, he argues that they can be explained through three major theories or movements: NWICO (New World Information and Communication Order), electronic colonialism, and world system theories: "International communication will have a greater impact on the future of the planet than exploration and transportation combined" (p.35). McPhail clarifies the debate about the NWICO as dominating the international communication agenda for about two decades late in the twentieth century, with its final objective to restructure the system of media and telecommunication priorities so that lesser developed countries could "obtain greater influence over their media, information, economic, cultural, and political systems" (p.12) and represents:

- (1) An evolutionary process seeking a more just and equitable balance In the free flow and content of information;
- (2) A right to national self-determination of domestic communication policies; and
- (3) At the international level, a two-way information flow reflecting more accurately the aspirations and activities of less developed countries (LDCs). (pp.12-13)

McPhail identifies the Electronic Colonialism Theory (ECT) as passing through four epochs of empire-building: the Greco-Roman period; the Crusades of the Middle Ages, also called Christian colonialism; the mercantile colonialism in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries of the British, French, Spanish, Belgians, Italians, Dutch, and Portuguese conquests of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East; and finally, with the rise of nationalism and decolonization, the recent and current electronic colonialism represents the dependent relationship of poorer regions on the post-industrial nations, especially in the area of communication transfer. This has resulted in a new global culture created by “the large multimedia conglomerates.” “ECT focuses on how global media, including advertising, influence how people look, think, and act.... Just as the era of the Industrial Revolution focused on manual labor, raw materials, and then finished products, so also the Information Revolution now seeks to focus on the role and consequences concerning the mind and global consumer behavior” (p. 18).

McPhail labels what he considers the third major aspect in considering both the international and global communication revolution as the World System Theory (WST), which identifies the core, periphery, and semiperiphery zones in today’s global setting. He defines the core zone as “Capital intensive, high-wage, high-technology production, involving lower labor exploitation and coercion”; the semi-periphery zone as “Core-like activities, Peripheral-like activities”; and the periphery zone as “Labor-intensive, low-wage, low-technology production involving high labor exploitation and coercion.” He contends that the “World system theory states that global economic expansion takes place from a relatively small group of core-zone nation-states [the industrialized West] out to two other zones of nation-states, these being in the semi-peripheral and peripheral zones.” He identifies China as among the semi-peripheral nations, along with Brazil and India, all of which can expect in the near future to become core nation-states, rivaling both the US and European Union’s initial ten nation-states. McPhail sees both the recent Electronic Colonialism theory and the World System theory as being closely linked (p. 27).

In this sense, we can also see the merger of both international and global communication through what McPhail calls “three new strong hegemonic communication forces stemming from: (1) expansion of cable and satellite broadcasting systems; (2) An avalanche of Western, primarily American, television and movie programming, and (3) The collective rules of the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.” McPhail notes that issues facing both international and global communication are explained through the three major theories or movements which he has proposed: “Collectively, they help organize or frame the trends, economics, technologies, and stakeholders involved in the dynamic, globally significant, and expanding role of international communication” (p. 31).

Chinese Communications and the Civil Society

John H. Powers and Randy Kluver(1999) suggest that earlier periods in China were framed by “fragmentation, civil war, and Japanese occupation, wherein little progress was made toward the evolution of civil society in the modern sense. From the founding of the People’s Republic, the development of ‘civil society with Chinese characteristics floundered while the nation lurched from one top-driven political movement to another.”(p.2) They propose that “From a communication framework civic society may develop on either a top down or bottom up basis, or within various groups in the society, and also between the central government and other international and global actors. Not only has there been the possibility of internal and external civic communication but also between the internal Chinese society and the world-wide Chinese diaspora” (pp. 1-2).

Kluver (1999) writes that civil society allows citizens a voice in influencing social and political life outside the power of the state itself. He calls civic discourse the ability to define the nature of the society and its people, including economics, cultural and social issues, and popular culture, by which the national identity can be expressed. Civic discourse helps to create the society, and the civil society helps to promote civic discourse, much like Hall’s claim that culture is communication and communication is culture. Civic discourse is seen not only in political matters in China, where those in power in the Party and government provide the substantial part of the discourse, but also in popular culture including the arts, music, books, TV, advertisements, the internet both as a form of exercising communicative interactions and in a major way in China as entertainment. Given the ever increasing importance of education at all levels in China, not only do the political leaders exercise power in the civic society, but also intellectuals (zhishifenzi) from the major universities (Kluver, 1999), In the tradition of the dyanastic periods, the Confucian scholar-officials tended also to serve as “the conscience of the emperor.” The cultural assumption that the scholars have a moral duty not only to innovate, but also to concern themselves about the progress of the society, remains true today. Kluver believes “that intellectuals have been and will continue to be a vital element of Chinese civic discourse.” Additionally, Kluver claims that the guiding principles of Marxism-Leninism/Mao Zedong Thought also contribute to the role that intellectual elites play in China’s civic discourse, which Deng Xiaoping reinforced to the development of social order, with a strong and well educated set of leaders leading and guiding the general population (1999). Just as Jacques Martin (2009) has argued, Kluver also believes that the new Chinese society may develop some democratic tendencies quite unlike the Western model of

democracy: "The future is likely to bring an even more diverse set of ideas into a culture and a society that is rapidly constructing a new identity, and a new Chinese world" (p. 22).

In Prosser's (2007) essay, "One World, One Dream," he concluded by saying that: "Some scholars claim that the twenty-first century will be the China/India century, since the two countries are expanding quickly economically, and more and more providing significant contributions internationally. We may also speculate that indeed China itself will be a major harmonizer interculturally for the twenty-first century, and, that in fact, the twenty-first century can be the China century" (p.77). If Jacques Martin's book, *When China Rules the World*, the strong economy, more responsibilities of an international stake-holder leadership emerging, continuing infrastructure and environmentally friendly developments, the rise of the middle class through more and more well educated citizens, and potential successes of the coming fifth generation of leaders are all accurate, then we may indeed already be in the second decade of the China Century.

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