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## Postprint: Strategic Countermeasures Against Western Cultural Hegemony

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Addressing the latent risks to cultural strategic security arising from China's rapid economic development over the past three decades of reform and opening up, alongside the intensification of economic globalization, this study conducts an in-depth examination of cultural strategic security and proposes solution-oriented countermeasures. In the context of a rapidly evolving international landscape and the continuous enhancement of national cultural soft power, research on cultural strategic security holds profound strategic significance.

[Method/Process] The study employs a macro-perspective approach with horizontal comparative analysis, consistently contextualizing domestic understanding within a global framework and drawing close connections with the successful experiences of developed nations and cultural powers, thereby enhancing the referential and guiding value of the analysis.

[Results/Conclusions] The primary strategy for strengthening China's cultural strategic security resides in reinforcing cultural identity and safeguarding the dominant position of national culture. Secondly, cultural diplomacy should be leveraged to showcase the distinctive appeal of Chinese culture, enabling Chinese cultural brands to penetrate international cultural markets and capture market share. Furthermore, it is essential to draw upon the experiences of other nations to properly balance government leadership with market regulation, and to constrain and diminish the influence of cultural hegemony. Particularly in international cultural trade and exchanges, the principle of cultural exception should be utilized to exercise appropriate control over Western cultural products, and cultural protective barriers should be established.

## Full Text

### Strategic Approaches to Resisting Western Cultural Hegemony

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#### Abstract

**[Purpose/Significance]** This paper examines the hidden dangers to cultural strategic security amid China's rapid economic development over the past three decades of reform and opening-up and intensifying economic globalization. It provides an in-depth analysis of cultural strategic security and proposes strategic solutions. Against the backdrop of a volatile international landscape and China's rising cultural soft power, research on cultural strategic security holds major strategic significance.

**[Method/Process]** The study employs a broad perspective and horizontal comparative approach, consistently situating self-reflection within a global context while drawing closely upon the successful experiences of developed nations and cultural powers to enhance the analytical relevance and guidance.

**[Result/Conclusion]** The primary strategy for strengthening China's cultural strategic security lies in enhancing cultural identity to ensure the dominant position of national culture. Second, cultural diplomacy should be utilized to showcase the unique charm of Chinese culture, enabling Chinese cultural brands to enter the international cultural market and capture market share. Additionally, China should learn from other countries' experiences to balance government guidance with market regulation, and to restrict and undermine the influence of cultural hegemony. In particular, in international cultural trade and exchanges, the principle of cultural exception should be applied to exercise appropriate control over Western cultural products, and cultural barriers should be established.

**Keywords:** cultural strategy; cultural security; cultural hegemony

**Classification Number:** G251

#### Cultural Hegemony: Conceptual Evolution

Cultural hegemony has received varying degrees of scholarly attention across different historical periods. In the early twentieth century, Western leftist sociologists used the term to describe the bourgeoisie's attempt to dominate mainstream culture. The renowned Italian Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci proposed a "strategic distinction" in his discussion of cultural hegemony, dividing struggles among nations, states, and classes into a "War of Position" and a "War of Maneuver" [1]. He argued that in the early imperialist period, dependence on the War of Position opened the resource vaults and markets of poor and weak nations, whereas in the later period, the War of Maneuver became the pri-

mary means to assimilate, influence, and subjugate the masses. Consequently, he proposed that revolutionaries must resist neocolonialism not only politically and militarily, but also by constructing their own worldview, formulating their own cultural strategies, and actively promoting their own ideas to enhance class consciousness, disseminate revolutionary theory and historical materialism, and truly liberate themselves from the spiritual oppression of colonizers.

Following the Cold War, particularly since China's reform and opening-up, the world has presented a trend toward pluralism, multipolarity, and diversity, and cultural hegemony has acquired new historical meanings. It has gradually evolved from class-based cultural hegemony measured in social hierarchies to international cultural hegemony measured in nation-states. In this process, many victim nations of modern colonialism, developing countries with lower living standards, and declining traditional civilizations all face crises of cultural sovereignty. Having endured over a century of imperialist erosion, China itself faces the arduous task of reconciling its inherent civilization with modern culture, while economic development remains a long and arduous undertaking. With all three criteria satisfied, it is evident that China's cultural security threats are enormous, the work of resisting Western cultural hegemony is critically important, and the formulation of corresponding cultural strategies is extremely urgent.

## 1. Strengthening Cultural Identity to Ensure the Dominant Position of National Culture

It must be acknowledged that the cultural values and spiritual pillars upon which we depend have been distorted by the impact of foreign cultures, weakening national cultural identity and posing a grave challenge to the cohesion of the Chinese nation. Therefore, only by inspiring a sense of identification with and pride in national culture across the entire populace can we enhance our capacity to resist Western cultural hegemony. Although many scholars offer different interpretations of the "Greater Chinese Cultural Circle" concept, "Greater China" has transcended geographical boundaries to acquire deeper cultural connotations. To consolidate the dominant position of national culture, we must break through cultural territoriality to maximize cultural vitality.

As China's economy and culture develop rapidly, its influence on neighboring countries gradually increases, and the Greater Chinese Cultural Circle will expand to surrounding regions. By definition, the "Greater Chinese Cultural Circle" encompasses the sphere of Chinese cultural influence. Its development model centers first on mainland China as the core, with Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan forming the second circle; the third circle consists of countries historically significantly influenced by Chinese culture, including Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, and Thailand. The fourth circle can be roughly divided into two categories. The first category comprises Chinese diaspora communities worldwide, particularly those in culturally and economically developed countries across the Americas, Europe, and Oceania, who have become citizens of their host coun-

tries while establishing their own communities. The second category includes non-Chinese individuals who love Chinese culture or have been influenced by it, as well as those engaged in business and trade with China. Since the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of people from Taiwan emigrated overseas; after the 1980s, people from Hong Kong and mainland China flocked to Europe and America, even reaching the Middle East and Africa. Although they politically identify with their host countries, blood is thicker than water, and culturally they identify with China. As overseas Chinese scholar Tu Weiming stated in the *Encyclopedia of Overseas Chinese*, members of the global “Cultural China” include not only all ethnic Chinese but also non-Chinese scholars, cultural workers, industrialists, businessmen, entrepreneurs, and writers who attempt to understand China intellectually and bring their concepts of China into their own linguistic domains [2].

Strengthening national cultural identity represents the nation’s self-identification, self-affirmation, and self-cohesion centered on Chinese culture. Throughout historical development, continuous cultural exchange and dissemination have gradually formed a Chinese cultural circle originating from China and spreading across the world. Against a multicultural background, using national cultural identity as an entry point to strengthen the Greater Chinese Cultural Circle holds significant meaning for enhancing national belonging and state cohesion. For global Chinese communities, commonalities exist in racial heritage, cultural roots, and national sentiment—the so-called shared ancestry and culture—referring to belonging to the same nation and cherishing and identifying with the essence and excellent components of Chinese culture. We must strive to excavate, organize, and promote outstanding traditional national culture, give full play to culture’s cohesive function, and forge new glories for Chinese culture.

Overseas Chinese and large numbers of international students constitute an important force for Chinese cultural dissemination and exchange. The reason the Chinese nation can endure countless hardships without declining and withstand immense suffering without yielding lies in its possession of a spiritual homeland upon which the nation relies for survival and development—a homeland deeply integrated into the nation’s soul and bloodstream. This spiritual homeland is Chinese culture, the only culture in the world that has continued uninterrupted for thousands of years, possessing tremendous inclusiveness and powerful cohesion. A spiritual homeland represents the spiritual belonging and habitat of a nation and its people.

Surprisingly, China is not a destination country for international students but rather the largest exporter of students abroad. This is attributable on the one hand to the advanced science, technology, management, and economic resources of the West, and on the other hand to the West’s insufficient recognition of Chinese culture’s inherent charm. In response, China can attract international students through various means, as they represent an important force for disseminating Chinese culture abroad while also constituting valuable human

resources. America's current achievements would be unimaginable without the large influx of students and immigrants, many of whom have entered American politics. International students coming to China can both disseminate and promote Chinese culture. When more and more international students grow to love China, they may apply the Chinese culture they have learned to their own careers, whether in China or other countries.

Therefore, increasing the recruitment, admission, and cultivation of overseas students represents an important method of cultural dissemination and, conversely, an important means of promoting national cohesion.

## 2. Utilizing Cultural Diplomacy to Showcase Chinese Culture's Unique Charm and Capture International Cultural Market Share

China faces not only a massive cultural exchange deficit but also a cultural exchange gap in terms of both import and export. Consider China's translation industry: while countless Western classics have been translated into Chinese, Chinese works translated for export are limited to a small number of Tang poems and elementary readers. Meanwhile, Western bookstores predominantly feature mystical and practical books on "feng shui," the *I Ching*, the *Bagua*, and cookbooks. Most reliable academic monographs remain shelved and shrouded in political fog, unable to compete with sensationalist best-sellers and media reports that distort Chinese reality. China's "Culture Going Out" strategy aims to bring cultural brands with "Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese ethos" to the international cultural market rather than remaining outside the global market system. It seeks to compel the West to pay attention to the latest ideas of contemporary Chinese scholars and China's newest cultural developments. Facing ordinary Western audiences, we should leverage visual internet media to disseminate Chinese culture and present Westerners with an authentic and intuitive image of China, reducing the layers of intentional misinterpretation stemming from ideological reasons and comprehensively promoting China's high-end cultural elite image.

We should not limit ourselves to Chinese language teaching but should impart the essence of various traditional Chinese arts and culture holistically, enabling direct dialogue with Westerners on cutting-edge global topics. Our vision should extend beyond singers, performers, and artists to include scholars and professors who can also go abroad. Compared to formal arts, the export of ideas possesses more profound and lasting cultural impact.

Data indicate that the global cultural industry market reached \$2.337 trillion in 2013. By region, North America held the highest market share at 35.2%; Europe, the Middle East, and Africa collectively accounted for 30.9%; the Asia-Pacific region represented 27.4%; and Central and South America comprised 6.5% [3]. Looking at East Asia, Japan vigorously promoted its culture during its economic downturn in the 1990s. South Korea targeted the international

market of six billion people, with its cultural industry accounting for 5% of the global share in 2007. In the most standardized publishing industry, China's market share in world publishing trade remains small. Although China's market share has steadily increased in recent years, the overall pattern remains unchanged. Under the existing circumstances, how can Chinese culture break through bottlenecks and go global? This is a long-term strategic question that all sectors of Chinese society must contemplate.

Cultural markets constitute an important form of cultural dissemination and circulation and carry the most significant meaning for national cultural sovereignty in the realm of cultural security. To influence a country's mainstream ideology, one must first enter its mainstream cultural market; consequently, market access as a universal principle holds special importance for cultural security. During Sino-American negotiations over China's WTO accession, cultural market access became a focal point, revealing the core position of cultural market issues in both parties' considerations and its weight in diplomacy. Currently, global cultural markets concentrate primarily on mass entertainment such as films, music records, animation, and computer games, with all nations sparing no expense to compete for this market. According to the *Blue Book of Culture: Report on the Development of China's Cultural Industries (2015-2016)* [4], problems in implementing China's "Culture Going Out" strategy in recent years can essentially be attributed to "using domestic propaganda models for external propaganda." What is needed now is to "use external propaganda innovation to drive internal propaganda reform," which requires further deepening of cultural system reform. The primary characteristic of Chinese cultural industries entering a new phase is changing the relationship between government and market. China's cultural industries are increasingly integrated into the real economy, displaying scenes similar to those in developed countries. The key issue is not the popularity of foreign cultural products in China but rather our lack of equally competitive cultural products to compete for market share. If this situation does not change, warnings about China's cultural market being occupied by foreign cultural products will be more than mere alarmism.

As a form of soft power, culture possesses strong permeability into politics, economy, and society. External cultural exchange must employ channels and methods that are appealing and readily accepted to promote Chinese culture globally. If cultural external propaganda is too overt, excessively official, or overly influenced by political conditions, it can easily arouse unnecessary suspicion and antipathy. The purpose of cultural diplomacy is to promote mutual understanding and trust between nations and peoples, to foster comprehension, identification, and appreciation of one's own values and lifestyle by foreign publics and opinion, and to construct and enhance a favorable international image. Cultural diplomacy refers to diplomatic activities conducted by sovereign states through cultural means to safeguard national cultural interests and achieve foreign cultural strategic goals under the guidance of specific foreign cultural policies. In cultural diplomacy, the government's leading role and political objectives are implicit, realized through multi-level cultural exchanges. Civilian cultural ex-

changes are particularly important. The Chinese government actively creates conditions to encourage civilian exchanges, using policy and regulatory levers to encourage cultural enterprises to enter the world market through market operations consistent with international practices. Through sustained, continuous cultural diplomacy, China increases trust with neighboring countries, enhances understanding with Western developed nations, and stabilizes and consolidates traditional friendships with developing countries, achieving the effect of promoting official relations through civilian channels. Government-led external cultural exchange has become a highlight of cultural diplomacy in recent years. Through reciprocal “Cultural Festivals,” “Cultural Weeks,” “Cultural Seasons,” and “Cultural Years” agreed upon with different countries, China has demonstrated the rich connotations and unique charm of its culture, increased mutual understanding between Chinese and other peoples, and opened new vistas for Chinese culture in international cultural markets. Reviving Chinese culture, protecting cultural heritage, and consolidating the foundations of traditional Chinese culture constitute the most basic requirements for safeguarding Chinese cultural security under conditions of cultural globalization. They are prerequisites for establishing Chinese culture’s position in international culture and the foundation for promoting cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy has become an important component of China’s external cultural exchange, requiring not only leveraging the roles of the China Confucius Foundation and the International Confucian Association but also expanding multiple channels and means of cultural diplomacy to absorb more non-governmental organizations.

### 3. Restricting and Undermining the Influence of Cultural Hegemony

After World War II, American culture entered Europe forcefully, including Western and Eastern Europe. However, European culture did not passively accept Americanization. France, Germany, Canada, and other countries dedicated themselves to safeguarding their own national cultures, with France being particularly prominent. Two major cultural camps formed internationally around the platforms of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and UNESCO. The United States’ withdrawal from UNESCO in 1984 itself demonstrated that while two major political camps formed around NATO and the United Nations, the WTO and UNESCO represented specific cultural manifestations. Since the 1980s, as the global cultural industry developed rapidly, culture has become an important national strategic issue for all countries. In 1993, the United Kingdom issued *A Creative Future* [5], the first official document in British history promulgating a national cultural and arts development strategy. In 1994, Australia also issued its cultural policy, *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy* [6]. In 1998, European countries successively launched their own cultural policies, promoting their national cultures more vigorously. Currently, 27 European countries have introduced cultural policies. In 1995, Japan launched its “Culture Establishing Nation” national policy, and in 1998, South Korea also launched its “Culture Establishing Nation” policy. The cultural battle has long since begun.

In this atmosphere, China' s “National Cultural Development Strategy” must necessarily draw upon the experience of Western developed countries in resisting American cultural dominance and unite with forces in Western developed countries that resist American cultural dominance. This involves opposing cultural hegemony on the one hand while developing national culture on the other, which has become an inevitable requirement for Chinese cultural development.

Canada and EU member states such as France have advocated against incorporating international trade in cultural goods into the American framework of “trade liberalization,” while simultaneously expanding international cultural markets in their trade wars with the United States, disseminating their own cultures and values, and enlarging their national cultures' space for survival and development in the international arena. Through active participation in international cultural market competition, they safeguard national cultural security. For instance, in Canada' s cultural development, civil society forces cannot be ignored, and market regulation also plays a role, but the government plays an important leading role. This is manifested primarily in: (1) the government directly operating cultural industries, such as constructing archives and libraries, providing film and related services, preserving cultural and natural heritage, operating performing arts academies and related facilities and services—all of which are government-owned; (2) subsidizing artistic groups, cultural and natural heritage institutions, artists, and cultural industries; (3) formulating cultural laws, regulations, and policies, such as restrictions on exporting national-level cultural products and establishing tax policies; and (4) providing special services, such as international expansion and loan programs for performing arts and museums. Currently, China' s cultural development also features government leadership, making it essential to carefully consider how to balance government guidance with market regulation. Learning from other countries' experiences represents an important pathway.

#### **4. Utilizing the Cultural Exception Principle in International Cultural Trade and Exchange to Exercise Appropriate Control over Western Cultural Products**

The success of American cultural industries can be summarized as relying primarily on “three chips.” First is “film reels” —Hollywood blockbusters with massive investment, large-scale production, visual impact, and star power that tirelessly promote imperialist ideology and daily life rules globally. Second is “potato chips” —fast food that has swept the world, reaching into towns large and small in China, shaping American dreams for generations of Eastern children through “food culture.” Third is “computer chips” —the American Windows system dominates operating systems for personal users worldwide. American cultural control and dissemination transform people' s thinking patterns across all aspects, from food culture and visual culture to office culture. In recent years, China' s rising economy has attracted worldwide attention. If China' s cultural charm and influence cannot match its economic power, the consequences will be

severe.

The most critical aspect of cultural market security concerns the security of cultural goods circulation. Excessive opening of cultural markets without establishing barriers will inevitably pose a tremendous threat to China's cultural goods circulation security. Once the main channels of cultural goods circulation are occupied, the government loses its macro-control capability over the market. Particularly when China's cultural goods circulation industry cannot yet equally compete in international circulation, asymmetric opening of cultural markets will further aggravate the severity of China's cultural market security.

Many countries worldwide, including Western developed nations, have adopted cultural protectionist policies and established prevention mechanisms for the sake of their own national cultural interests. To resist and restrict the sale and dissemination of American cultural entertainment products in France and protect French cultural industries, France mandates that at least 40% of television and radio programming must be in French. After expelling the American "Country Music Television" from Canada in 1995, Canada implemented Bill C-55 to protect its periodical industry [7]. This bill prohibits Canadian enterprises from advertising in foreign journals distributed in Canada, with violators subject to heavy fines, thereby cutting off the financial resources of American periodicals in Canada and protecting domestic cultural industries. If France, Canada, and even the entire EU can recognize that culture is "a vital issue concerning our identity, values, and differences" and legislate cultural protection policy systems to safeguard their cultural industries, then a country like China, with enormous cultural differences from Western mainstream countries, should certainly establish cultural barriers.

International trade in cultural goods involves the exchange of cultural and spiritual products, encompassing ideology and various domains of different cultural traditions. Many aspects of the values embodied in these ideologies and cultural traditions are fundamentally opposed. Exporting cultural products to other countries to disseminate cultural concepts and ideology constitutes an important form and primary means of struggle and competition in contemporary international society. The United States, relying on its dominant position in the cultural industry, forcibly demands "market access" to any country or region to implement cultural penetration under the guise of "trade liberalization," promoting American culture and values to ultimately achieve victory without war. This represents the most typical manifestation. Consequently, within its policy system, the WTO stipulates not only principles such as market access, transparency, non-discrimination, and most-favored-nation treatment but also includes provisions for "artworks and cultural relics involving the preservation of traditional culture," "allowing exceptions and implementing safeguard measures," and "maintaining national security." This enables any country, particularly developing or least-developed countries, to formulate relevant policies to protect themselves from the perspective of safeguarding fundamental cultural interests and cultural security. The WTO principle protects the particularity of national

cultures, supports the coexistence of diverse national cultures, and maintains the richness and diversity of world cultures.

American scholar Joseph Nye, in his book *The Future of Power*, divides political power into “power of coercion” and “power of seduction,” with the latter being what we commonly call soft power. Soft power is further divided into three categories: culture, political values, and policies [8]. While the latter two carry political utilitarian color, culture represents the ultimate soft power that plays a dominant role, serving as the source of national cohesion and a symbol of comprehensive national power. The complexity of great power cultural strategy lies in: (1) its dependence on both individual creativity and collective guidance, testing our ability to coordinate government intervention in cultural policy with popular contribution of cultural resources; (2) its emphasis on national cultural identity, which entails inherent exclusivity, while simultaneously requiring high compatibility on the broad international stage to be accepted by others rather than mutually rejected; and (3) its need to maintain the historicity of national cultural paths to draw experience while innovating on old paths to ensure the timeliness of our cultural development. From this perspective, cultural strategy is not merely a “continuation of economics” or “subsidiary of politics.” How to strategically resist cultural hegemony, protect and develop our national culture, continue China’ s cultural traditions, and contribute to the progress of world civilization on the journey of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation represents a major task facing all Chinese people and an increasingly urgent mission for the coming decades.

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