



Chinese Society and the Export of Uncertainty

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Conference on Brazil-China in Transition

Sao Paulo 21 November 2012

On the knife -edge between daring innovation and sectional interests

A. Structural roots of uncertainty...

B. ...Amplified as it finds expression...

C. ...And exported to the world

*What current dramas teach us about
China's perception of its international role*

A. Structural Roots of Uncertainty...

1. National Identity: as in a glass, darkly

2. Legitimacy: from surplus to deficit

3. National unity: The holy grail

B. ...Amplified as it Finds Expression...

4. *Regulatory gridlock*

5. *Imposing social justice on the socialist market*

6. *Citizen rights vs. status entitlement*

C. ...And Exported to the World

7. *Costs of the export economy*

8. *“Only China can destroy socialism”*

9. *“Here come the Chinese multinationals”*

1. National identity: “As in a glass, darkly”

1. Multi-ethnic state

2. Modernity, tradition, values

3. “Pessoptimist nation”

2. Legitimacy: from surplus to deficit

Multiple resources of legitimacy

Monopoly of legitimacy...

....Leading to deficit

3. National unity: The holy grail

What was China?

1. Empire
2. Manchu Dynasty
3. Centre of *tianxia*

4. Regulatory gridlock

Doctrine of “grand unity”

case study: food safety

5. Imposing Social Justice on the Market

1949-1978

Class-based doctrine of rights

Decitizenisation and status entitlement

Citizen-based rights 1982 —

6. Citizen Rights vs Status Entitlement

Reform era:

Legislative advance premised on enhanced citizen rights

Increased factors of uncertainty, patchwork governance and vacillation

7. Costs of the export economy

“Low human rights advantage”

High savings and investment, low consumption

From stability maintenance to social management

8. “Only China can destroy socialism”

Temptations of the China model

Race to the bottom

9. “Here come the Chinese multinationals”

The benefits of strong regulatory regimes

Learning curves in “going global”

Multiple actors in China’s external impact

Social Inequality

- Analysed in China in terms of “lack of rights” transition from subject to citizen
- Not reducible to economics or culture

Politics of identity

- religion – a low level factor in comparative terms
- ethnicity – moving from the back-burner to the front
- gender – an indicator rather than a cause
- citizenship: key dimension displayed above all in the migrant worker economy

Cognitive dissonance

- back to
 - national identity
 - legitimacy
 - national unity
- major social reform doctrines offer different solutions:
 - social justice
 - social order

The social order frame

- Implicit values of
 - hierarchy
 - stability maintenance
 - Statism
 - collective truth
 - collective freedom

The social justice frame

- Implicit values of
 - citizenship
 - equality
 - individual truth
 - individual freedom

Obrigado !



I have a general distrust of ambitious, overarching attempts to capture a whole socioeconomic system in a few grand generalizations.

—Robert M. Solow, review of *Prophet of Innovation: Joseph Schumpeter and Creative Destruction*
by Thomas K. McCraw