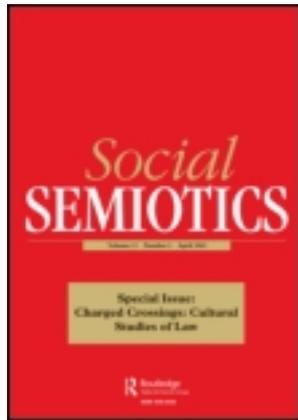


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Three faces of Chinese modernity: nationalism, globalization, and science

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Three faces of Chinese modernity: nationalism, globalization, and science

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This article addresses three facets of modernity that are signified by slogans and spatial settings in Beijing, China. The research was conducted as a preliminary study of the communication process in the course of globalization and nationalism reflected in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. This article uses some photographs and observations to analyze symbolic meanings of slogans and spaces from Beijing in summer 2007, a year before the Games. Since slogans in China have a long tradition, the repeated usages of slogans and their relations to the spatial settings might signify strong messages to promote governmental orientations. This article explores slogans on Tiananmen Square in relation to the political space, a huge sign displaying the motto of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in Wangfujing district in relation to the economic space, and slogans in an old and poor district under a redevelopment project. The article posits that these three slogans and spaces reflect three different facets of Chinese modernity: nationalism, globalization, and developmental ideology.

Keywords: China; modernity; space; slogan; nationalism; globalization; science

Introduction

Soon after I arrived in the United States in 2002 to pursue my Master of Arts degree in anthropology, I had lunch with some American students. One student had spent several years in China, and the other student was preparing for her job as an English teacher in South Korea. Since I had spent a month in China as a backpacker, we were able to chat about stories of China and South Korea. In the middle of lunch, a student asked me “Is there Kentucky Fried Chicken in Korea?” I simply answered “Yes” because at that time a long conversation in English was very tiresome for me. Then she said “Huh, really?”, as if she was somewhat astonished by my answer. At that point I thought to myself:

How could she think a country that had hosted the World Cup Soccer Game would have no KFC restaurant? Why does her question bother me so much, especially since I hate these globalized greasy American fast-food restaurants? What does “really” mean?

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Since her major was physical anthropology, and not cultural anthropology, I could accept her relative ignorance of other countries. However, I did not like to hear that my home country was regarded as a backward country; I did not like the brutal expansion of global capital; I did not like to be called a nationalist, and thus I did not know what I was thinking about.

As trifling as it may seem, this incident provided the impetus for the following article. I would like to show my complex reactions to the meanings of *modern* and *advanced*. We people in the modern world praise modernity, but at the same time we blame it. Many think global capitalism is very harmful to the nature of human beings, but at the same time they think countries that have banned the global “fancy” commodities are backward, brutal, and despotic. Having been raised in a highly pro-western society, I am not free from the double standards. When I was very young, I initially tried to maintain an open mind to the alleged potential of capitalism to alleviate extreme poverty. Nevertheless, I usually end up equating global capitalism with despotism, even totalitarianism. Many books on Chinese modernization in the post-Mao era criticize the domination of the Chinese government on the road to being a modern, globalized state. The critics have several “reasonable” reasons; the crackdown on Tiananmen Square in 1989, the long history of governmental censorship, and the brutal eviction of poor residents outside of cities during redevelopment projects. I strongly agree with their criticisms. However, they sometimes lose their ability to express critical views on global capitalism. For instance, when Broudehoux (2004) criticizes the lack of transparency in government politics during the advertisement ban on Chan An Avenue, which is a symbolic, political center of Beijing, she says that:

advertising agencies and building owners who are given less than two months’ notice to tear down their billboards saw the clean-up operation as stark proof of the government’s unyielding authoritarianism . . . [and] the ban represented an estimated one hundred million yuan loss to advertising firms. (Broudehoux 2004, 165)

Although she criticizes the expansion of global capitalism and Chinese strategy as a global player, Broudehoux blames the Chinese government for banning commercial advertisements around the political center of China. Her criticism of the Chinese government is reasonable because of the government’s authoritative decision-making. I have experienced this kind of radical commercialization and brutal authoritarianism in Korea for many years. How do I understand this conflict between capitalism and the state? At the same time I could pose a question: How many Beijingers like the huge Coca Cola sign right next to the Forbidden City? I have never seen a huge commercial advertisement near the palace at the center of Seoul or near Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The difference between Beijing and Shanghai is not very far from the difference between Washington, DC and New York City in terms of functions of the city. However, I do not blame their losing stance on capitalism because it is always possible under the complexity of modernity that complex standards of modernity exist in our minds.

For instance, modernity premises democracy as a “better” political system than any other system. Under this premise, political systems tend to be dichotomized as “democratic” or “undemocratic.” This dichotomized perception of political systems has made people tend to blame any kind of state-led actions as undemocratic. As a

Korean who observed totalitarian political oppressions and government-driven rapid economic development, I have been annoyed by the ceaseless praise of Korean development by international political leaders and scholars. Korean development has been praised as a model for the underdeveloped world. However, there have been only few who have deeply criticized the oppression of Korean military regimes in the course of economic development. At best, many of them have pointed out that despotism was a “necessary evil” in order to build a “good” advanced nation-state. In other words, “advanced” is assumed as a virtue no matter what forces realize it in the modern world. At this point, two moderns – democracy and economic development – collide.

In Beijing, one year before its mega-event, I observed these complex aspects of modernity: the authoritative spatial settings and decades-old national slogans in Tiananmen Square, the crowdedness of Wangfujing and the cosmopolitan catchphrases, and the wiping out of old districts and slogans spurring modern development. Political nationalism, global capitalism, and modern developmentalism are signified through these different spatial settings in accordance with certain slogans.

Theoretical review

Slogans under a certain context

While those who live in the advanced capitalist world are used to seeing sensational advertising copy, those who live in an area in which governmental enlightenment projects boom or top-down social relationships prevail are used to seeing various sociopolitical slogans on the wall of a subway station, a fence of a construction site, and so on. According to Shankel, “Slogans are ‘significant’ symbols of a society” (1941, cited in Lu 2004, 51). Slogans usually simplify complicated ideas and reflect the ideology and goals of a certain group. They also function to create identity and force people to take sociopolitical actions. As explained by Lu (2004), slogans could be considered particular forms of public discourse aiming to unify public thought. Therefore, slogans in a certain territory should be considered signified symbols grounded in its history and culture.

China has a long tradition of slogans since a peasant rebellion raised a slogan against the cruelty of the Qin dynasty. In the course of modern Chinese history, three important events commonly used slogans: the May Fourth movement in 1919, the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, and the Cultural Revolution in the age of Mao (Lu 2004). The May Fourth movement aimed to promote democracy and modern science (Schwarcz 1990). The new socialist state promoted socialist modernization. The Cultural Revolution represented a mixture of modernity and premodernity, because while it aimed to promote anti-traditional acts on the one hand, it also aimed to elevate the cult of Mao on the other (Meisner 1999). Slogans in China have frequently been utilized in both historical mega-events and in everyday life as a means of mobilizing people (Lu 2004). Understanding the Chinese sociohistorical context in using slogans, this study expects that current national missions of China might be reflected by various slogans.

Since this research is concerned with slogans not via mass media but in some public spaces in Beijing, it is also necessary to see the meaning and role of a certain

district and the relationship between slogans and spaces. Slogans in a certain public space are expected to be strongly related to the symbolic meaning of the space for their maximum effectiveness. Therefore, semiotics could provide basic understandings of the role and meaning of slogans and spaces, and their relationships, as ways of representing Chinese complex modernity.

Contextual signs

Semioticians study a sign that is neither an object nor an independent entity (Nöth 1990). Even though their terminologies are different, they share the purpose of research, which is to study signs that are either a meaning makers or representations. According to Saussure, the language we use is based on a convention and “it makes no difference what exactly the nature of the agreed sign is” (1983, 10). Chandler further explains that “a text is an assemblage of signs constructed with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication” (2002, 3). In this study, the settings of spaces and slogans become media of communication representing realities of modern China. The sign systems are reflections of the ingrained structures of the sensory, emotional, and intellectual composition of the human body (Sebeok 2001). The structural understanding of a sign gives a clue for interpreting the roles of slogans, their representations, and their relationships with spatial settings where they are placed. China’s long tradition of slogans has structuralized some terms so they will be taken for granted in the society. Moreover, spatial characteristics, such as political space and economic space, interact organically with slogans to structuralize a certain message in stressing a vision of Chinese modernity.

In addition, the notion of “social usage” introduced by Barthes (1972) is crucial to understanding semiotics. Every concept of a word is subject to how (and, of course, when and where) a message sender uses it. For instance, in Mao’s China and even in post-Mao’s China, governmental slogans have played important roles in formulating social usages of language (Lu 2004). Through various slogans, the Chinese government announces new missions and directions for the society. Moreover, slogans become more structurized when they are placed in an intentionally designated space, like Tiananmen Square in Beijing, and then they become myths in a given society. “Mythology can only have an historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the ‘nature’ of things” (Barthes 1972, 110). In this statement, human “history” is that which “converts reality into speech and rules the life and the death of mythical language” (Barthes 1972, 110). In this sense, history works in the sign system in a given society as structure. Myth, in Barthes’s analysis, is a kind of sign that expresses its contents in relation to the structure of a given society.

According to Geertz (1973), culture contains its own meaning, which can be described by the concept of thick description, and it is made up of “the webs of significance.” Unlike some structuralists – such as Levi-Strauss, who posits a universal structure – Geertz emphasizes context and history in approaching to significance in a given society. In other words, Geertz assumes a specific culture as operating through webs of signs. Although Geertz shares with other structuralists the idea of structure making meaning of a sign, he sees that only a specific structure of culture can be meaningful for people in a given society. Various slogans in Beijing are

sets of symbols that can only be shared by Chinese people. Some scholars attempt to see several spaces in Beijing from theoretical perspectives (for example, Broudehoux 2004; King and Kusno 2000).

Although their critical and theoretical approaches to the spaces and slogans in China offer valuable critical ideas concerning government-dictated global capitalism, the understanding of the spaces and slogans based on Chinese history and culture, which could only be shared by Chinese people, should take precedence over this “universal” perspective. In semiotics, the context becomes a meaning (Hodge and Kress 1988). Therefore, the meaning of a sign could be transformed into other meanings in the course of interaction with receivers who have various contextual backgrounds. Therefore, the meanings of slogans and their relationships with spatial settings are very contingent upon observers.

The complex modernity

The modern world can be reflected by some beliefs, such as the singular perspective, efficiency, the method of fragmentation, and so on (Kramer 1997). “Objective” modernity makes it possible that “the modern world strives to eliminate context” (Kramer 1997, 14). Western hegemony has firmly grounded itself in the ideology of modern development and market expansion legitimized by the cultural homogenization of the world. There are two phases of western hegemony expansion; the first is realized by the spread of Christianity and its values and institutions, and the second is forced by the development of mass media and media technologies. However, the second phase does not exclude the first. Through expansion, western value has become an objective norm, moral, guideline, and destiny of people in the “modernizing world” as well as the western world. This western hegemony of modernity is called “European universalism” (Wallerstein 2006). European universalism suppresses contextual understandings and interpretations of various aspects of modernity.

A variety of social changes in the early modern world fortified the formulation of modernity, and then this modernity strengthened the sources of modernization, such as scientific knowledge, powerful nation-states, and capitalist world markets. Although the modern world believes in the linear progress of human beings, there are numerous aspects of modernity, which occasionally contradict each other. As Berman (1982) argues, although modernity is the force that strives to unite all humankind, this unity is a paradoxical unity. For instance, the emergence of a world market and the rise of nation-states and their accumulation of great power are juxtaposed at the core of modernity. However, this political power is undermined by capital (Berman 1982). This point of view on paradoxical modernity could also be controversial when we consider the role of nation-states as supporters for the expansion of capital and a good business climate. Likewise, the products of modernity sometimes can work together, but occasionally they negate each other. This complexity becomes extended when modernity is imported or transplanted to the outside of the modern world, the non-western world. Giddens argues that although “inherent in the idea of modernity is a contrast with tradition... many combinations of the modern and the traditional are to be found in concrete social settings” (1990, 36). That is to say, there are multiple modernities in the modern world (Eisenstadt 2000).

Chinese modernity

It is necessary to review the differences of Chinese modernity, since there are different reflections of the organic combination of Chinese past and present. As previously mentioned, Chun also points out that Eurocentrism in the discourse of modernity does not have a clear “distinction between ‘modern’ and ‘capitalist’ development outside the terrain of Europe” (2006, 22). As shown by the Soviet Union and many nations in the Soviet Eastern Bloc, socialism does not conflict with one of the most prominent aspects of modernity, economic development. Socialist modernization has been dictated by communist parties and their elites, who represent the majority class, the working class. Of course, while these elites are somewhat successful with economic development, they fail to represent the majority class. Therefore, socialist modernization is different from capitalist modernization, since the socialists do not promise liberal democracy, which is believed to be the product of economic development by many people. In addition, most socialists fail to maintain the growth of the economy, as well as their political power itself (Hollander 1983). However, the Chinese communist party achieved relatively successful socialist modernization in their second phase of modernization between 1949 and the pre-Cultural Revolution (Chun 2006). It has also successfully secured its political power, although there have been several crises, such as the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen crackdown.

The Chinese political authority changed the orientation of Chinese modernization with new adaptations of the capitalist market system in the post-Mao era (Gittings 2005). The combination of socialist, capitalist, and state-driven modernization has created a unique Chinese modernity. Moreover, as Giddens stresses in his discussion of reflexive modernity, the long tradition of Chinese bureaucracy must be considered in understanding Chinese modernity. Although it is a somewhat positive evaluation, Chun (2006) shows the hybridization of Chinese modernity; this coexistence of traditional and modern development makes it possible that the Chinese government “may look simultaneously moralistic and pragmatic, patrimonial and professional, and patriarchal and socialist” (2006, 29).

On the other hand, post-Mao Chinese modernity is identical with other capitalist discourses of modernity in some senses, since contemporary Chinese modernization has been driven by reform and opening policy (Zheng 1999). While there was rhetoric that accused the movement towards a market-based economy of being unpatriotic in the age of Mao’s China, there has emerged a new consensus regarding poverty as a shame of the nation in post-Mao Chinese politics. This new belief makes it possible to link patriotism and socioeconomic reformation (Hughes 2006). Reformation is accompanied by the opening of the country toward a world market, as Perestroika and Glasnost were together in the Gorbachev’s Soviet Union. This capitalist modernization in the contemporary Chinese political economy is influenced by “the notion of modernity as defined by other Asian nations” (Broudehoux 2004, 14).

In addition, it is necessary to point out that the mission of modernization, which actually is westernization, and the value of modernity have become a myth obsessed with modernization in many developing countries (Minns 2006). Contemporary China is not an exception to this tendency, which is facilitated by the ambivalence of pride in the glorious Chinese history of science, and humiliations suffered because of

western invaders' automated weapons. Although it is well known that China is the birthplace of the compass, paper, and gunpowder, China in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was known as the "sick man of Asia." The glorious past of China with its advanced scientific knowledge, and its losses to the western-dominated modern world, stimulate Chinese people and authorities to hold on to the development of science in promoting patriotism as well as globalization.

Findings

Modern 1: nationalism @ political shrine

I took a ferry to Tianjin, China, from Incheon, Korea, on my first trip to China in 2002. After 24 hours of sailing, the ferry approached Tianjin's port. I saw mammoth port structures with bright lights, China's huge national flags, and sober soldiers. The scene of Tianjin's port was exactly as I had imagined a socialist country would look like.

When I arrived on the outskirts of Beijing after a two-hour ride in a taxi, the first Beijinger I encountered was a beggar. Although I somehow expected that there were no big differences between Seoul, the capital of a capitalist state, and Beijing, the capital of a socialist state, I thought it was ironic to see a beggar on the street of a socialist state. The second day of my trip to Beijing started at Tiananmen Square because of my simple curiosity about the largest urban square in the world and the grandiose setting of a socialist political center. My second trip to Beijing five years later also started from the square, not to satisfy my curiosity about exotic things but to look for some changes in five years. However, there was no change except for a huge sign for the Beijing Olympic Games on the National Museum of China (Figure 1).

Tiananmen is the front gate of the Forbidden City, which was the Chinese imperial palace. It was built in 1417 during the Ming dynasty and was enlarged to its current size in 1949, the birth year of the People's Republic of China. Tiananmen, as the gate of imperial power, has played an important role as a signifier of the central powers and their authorities. This role was not shrunk even after the negation of imperial power by socialist power. As mentioned before, the significance of Tiananmen's role was even enlarged with the birth of the modern socialist state in 1949. The Monument to the People's Heroes and the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong are located inside the square, while the National Museum of China and Great Hall of Chinese People are along both sides. As is suggested by the names of the structures, the square is a highly symbolized space with the memory of the socialist revolution and the long history of China. Tiananmen Square and its vicinities, including underground walkways, are a commercial-free area. That is to say, this area is designated as a political island separated from the capitalist economy. On the Tiananmen, there is a huge portrait of Mao in the center with two slogans on either side of the portrait: "Long Live the People's Republic of China" and "Long Live the Unity of the Peoples of the World" (Figure 2).

The portrait and the slogans clearly signify Chinese socialism, nationalism, and communist internationalism. Therefore, the spatial setting of the structures and several signs play crucial roles in sending a message that displays the center of the nationalistic socialist revolution, which shares importance with other socialist



Figure 1. The National Museum of China with a huge sign of the Beijing Olympic Games.

movements in the Third World post-World War II. Although the official political-economic policy of the Chinese Communist Party has been differentiated from the Mao's China since his death, the Mausoleum and portrait of Mao Zedong are still placed at the heart of the political center. It is the strategic signification of the legitimate Chinese Communist Party. Even though contemporary political leaders relatively freely criticize the past, they signify the linkage of current patriotism, which could be epitomized by economic prosperity, and past patriotism, which could be explained by socialist modernization and differentiation, with the symbolic founder, Mao. Therefore, those are all signs about patriotism. More importantly, the two slogans signify national socialism with familiar words and colors. The color red is traditionally the symbolic color of China and the symbolic color of the communist world. For people who are in non-Chinese cultural areas, the words "Long Live" might sound strange. However, in the culture, the words "Long Live" literally mean a



Figure 2. The Tiananmen with Mao's portrait and two slogans.

desire for long life, but they are also utilized to encourage people to unite, praise prosperity, and hope for victory. In other words, “Long Live” in both slogans encourages people who are familiar with the words and their usage to be proud of their unity as a strong nation-state and socialist world. Of course, the slogan “the Unity of the People’s World” originated in Marx’s famous Communist Manifesto: “Working Men of All Countries, Unite!” (Marx and Engels 1972, 63). The slogan is a symbol of Marx’s proletariat globalism – communist internationalism – which is totally opposite the contemporary notion of globalization dominating every other district. Although the Chinese Communist Party opens the country to the world market system, it still sends a strong message to people to admire their successful socialist country and its legitimate ideology.

These slogans are not trendy products. Despite the rapid change of the Chinese social atmosphere and its global relationships, these slogans have been posted on the Tiananmen for a long time. The long-standing tradition of the slogans also signifies the spatial meaning as a national shrine that should be intact regardless of the rapid influx of global capitalism. While this strategy of the symbolization of nationalism and socialism aims to encourage people to be loyal to the political power, it does not conflict with the prevalent capitalism in any other districts in Beijing. Kramer and Kim (2009) argue that the juxtaposition of the discourses of globalism and nationalism is no longer ironic. As players in global capitalism, Chinese power elites need stronger loyalty, patriotism, and nationalism so that people will desire to be citizens of a strong nation in the world. This kind of nationalism can provide a good business climate to global players. The juxtaposition of globalism and nationalism becomes a vicious cycle: a good business climate fortifies the political power of the players.

In sum, the spatial setting of institutional structures and slogans around the Tiananmen Square signify reflexive meanings of nationalism and political official ideology along with traditional meaning of the place, familiar colors and words, and so on. At the same time, it fulfills the purpose of the message senders, which is to promote loyalty in order to strengthen their political power and fulfill their desire to be global players.

Modern 2: globalization @ crowded markets

Because of the notorious hot and humid temperature and smog in Beijing, I abandoned a tour of the Forbidden City on my second trip in 2007. I walked down to the east of the Tiananmen and arrived at Wangfujing Dajie (Street) only a few minutes later, where I was reminded that a friend studying in Beijing brought me to Wangfujing when I visited Beijing for the first time, and that there were some restaurants serving good food and interesting street markets packed by vendors.

The first image that caught my eye was a huge sign bearing the motto of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games: “One World, One Dream” (Figure 3). Like many people, I am very familiar with that kind of motto, especially because the motto of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games was similarly “Towards One World, Beyond All Barriers.”

Tomlinson and Young state that sports mega-events are “used by the host nations both to celebrate a historical legacy and to aspire to the expression of their modernity” (2006, 5). Thanks to the development of mass communication technology, the Olympics have become a more attractive globalized event along



Figure 3. A sign with the motto of the Olympic Games at Wangfujing.

with the World Cup Soccer Games. Since the first Olympic Games in 1896, only 18 countries have held the event, although 202 countries participated in the Olympics in Athens in 2004. Because of their huge scale, these events have been allowed in only those countries with strong economies that could afford to be hosts. Sponsorship by multinational corporations has also become a critical factor for successful events. In addition, it is also a critical criterion to select a host with enough infrastructures of modern transportation and communication. Therefore, the Games have been stages for showing the economic power and advanced technology of the hosts, and they have played an especially important role in spurring national development and improving global perception of the country, such as Japan in 1964 and Korea in 1988. Although virtually all countries in the world participate in the event, the Games always focus on a few powerful global players, as mass media pay all their attention to gold medal lists. The world in the motto “One World” represents only those few global players. As mentioned before, the world in the motto is not the same world of the slogan on the Tiananmen. The world in “One World” is not the unity of people, but the network of global powerful countries, cosmopolitans, and multinational corporations.

Unlike the area of Tiananmen Square, the area of Wangfujing is packed with various commercial advertisements of multinational corporations and brand shops, and thus this space fortifies the significance of the world of the Olympic motto as the network of those players. Wangfujing has long been known as the cosmopolitan commercial center in Beijing:

Wangfujing’s recent redevelopment is shown to be the embodiment of the cultural revolution set in motion by China’s recent reopening to the world markets, ideas, and cultures. This new revolution, of global consumerism, radically transformed the cultural fabric of the old Chinese capital, and was only nominally carried out by the Chinese Communist Party. (Broudehoux 2004, 95)

Wangfujing as a space signifies the Chinese re-emergence into the global market system and the central role of Chinese political power in doing so. Broudehoux (2004) exemplifies two projects, which are the transformation of Sun Dong An

market and Oriental Plaza, to show the process of recent modernization and globalization of Wangfujing. She argues these two projects clearly represent a Chinese governmentally driven globalization project. In summer 2007, one year ahead of the Games, numerous constructions and remodelings were going on. Fences around construction sites displayed various fancy images to signify modernization and globalization. As I have argued earlier, the discourse of modernization is dominated by the West, and images around this district are identical with any other cosmopolitan area. The area is flooded with English letters and Caucasian images (Figure 4). Now the reason the biggest motto sign, “One World, One Dream,” is placed at the entrance of Wangfujing’s commercial district is uncovered. The cosmopolitan commercial space facilitates the symbolic meaning of the motto, and it sends a strong message of Chinese modernization and globalization to both domestic and foreign pedestrians. Of course, the space and the huge sign bearing the motto lure global capitals to glorify the city and the country.

Modern 3: science @ underdeveloped sites

Beijing’s mayor has called for a speeding up of the demolition of impoverished neighborhoods in China’s capital as part of preparations for the 2008 Olympics. (Associated Press 2006)

The government is spending 10 billion yuan (\$1.88 billion) to rebuild or restore some 10,000 old courtyard homes along about 40 hutongs, the narrow old lanes that run through the heart of the capital around the Forbidden City and central Tiananmen Square. . . . The work will be completed by June next year in time for a massive influx of foreign visitors expected for the Aug 8–24 Olympic Games. (Agence France Presse 2007)

I moved south of Tiananmen Square. At the south end of the square, there is the Qianmen, which literally means “front gate.” When I first visited Beijing, I stayed at a cheap inn off Qianmen Dajie (Street), which was full of small stores and street vendors around a traditional street market. The district was one of the most



Figure 4. The images of Caucasians and English letters on the fence of Sun Dong An market during remodeling.

interesting places in Beijing because I could feel traditional China. When I arrived at the Qianmen in summer 2007, I faced a huge fence with models of the renovation of Qianmen Dajie (Figure 5). The fence blocked the street, Qianmen Dajie, which directly connects the south parts of Beijing to Tiananmen Square. The picture of the future plan expressed the harmony of the traditional and the modern. It would be a popular tourism site that would reflect Chinese tradition. However, it might lose the vivid everyday life of the Chinese people.

Beyond the fence, there was still a traditional street market, but many buildings were destroyed, like ruins after war. Since I had observed the cleaning up of the old and poor parts of Seoul before the 1988 Olympic Games, and various international media had reported the redevelopment of Beijing, the ruin was not strange to me. However, one image that caught my eye was the fence of a demolition site. The slogan “Love Science, Study Science, Utilize Science” was printed on the fence (Figure 6).

Slogans promoting a civilized society are common all over China. According to Broudehoux: “In October 1996, the Beijing leadership announced a campaign urging its citizens to join their effort to build a ‘spiritual civilization’” (2004, 179). As pointed out by many scholars (Berman 1982; Gebser 1985; Giddens 1990; Mumford 1962), science and scientific knowledge are two of the key characteristics of modernity. The western dominance of modernity is partly based on a belief in linear progress, and progress is possible through the development of technology based on scientific knowledge. This is the western world’s myth of modern civilization. The myth has permeated the world, especially those countries that desire rapid economic development, like China. Therefore, it is necessary for these countries to send messages that they are civilized and that they love and utilize science for their national missions. The slogan about science, juxtaposed with the destroyed old buildings, signifies that China will overcome the humiliation of Chinese backwardness and that the Chinese will step onto the global stage. Now, science in Chinese society has become an instrument linking nationalism and globalization and is a myth believed by Chinese citizens.



Figure 5. The fence that blocks Qianmen Dajie.



Figure 6. The fence with slogans about science at a demolition site.

Conclusion

Modernity, which is grounded in western ways of knowing and doing, tends to promote various values, such as nationalism, globalism, scientific knowledge, democracy, and so on. These values sometimes collide with each other and sometimes support each other. These values can also appear differently in different time periods and cultures. Therefore, modernity in a certain society should be interpreted within the framework of the specific cultural and historical contexts of that society. This article reviews Chinese complex values of modernity and their interrelationship with slogans and relationships with spatial settings.

There are three faces of modernity in Beijing, China, which I found one day on a walking tour. A year before the Olympic Games, Beijing was a huge construction field. Everywhere in Beijing, there were various slogans encouraging citizens to participate in the missions of successful Olympic Games and the accomplishment of a new Beijing and a great nation (Figure 7). In order to accomplish those missions, the Chinese people were asked to be more civilized by enjoying a love of science.



Figure 7. Campaign of New Beijing and McDonald's sign in a district of Beijing.

Then, with the Olympic motto of “One World, One Dream,” they enticed the world to see that their country resembles any other globalized city.

Unsurprisingly, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games are regarded as the entry point for China becoming a strong player in the globalized world. Despite this fact and the fancy renovation of space, poor residents were evicted from their hometown to make their country look stronger. In this sense, China as a nation-state is not a global player. Chinese power elites and businessmen who are members of global networks are global players who are eager to make good business climates. With the understanding of this unitary fashion of the globalized world, Chinese complex modernity can be comprehended completely. Chinese tradition and the legacy of socialism are contextually working on formulating a modern China. However, the modernization of China was also formulated within a context of global capitalism, not unlike that of any other developing country. Chinese power elites sent plenty of messages to the world and their citizens with the first worldwide event and modern renovations. The messages were not very different from those sent by forerunners in modernization and globalization. Chinese power elites urge citizens to be modernized and civilized to welcome the world. They ask citizens to maintain loyalties to the political power in order to sustain political stability. At the same time, they entice global capital to make them crucial global players. “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” was possible, but globalization with Chinese characteristics does not seem to be possible.

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