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Abstract: China presents the West with the single biggest challenge to its dominant globalization narrative because it starts from a quite different set of assumptions about the world order and from its own unique historical experience. In the West the narrative has been projected back to the early voyages of circumnavigation and on the way forward has absorbed ideas of borderless communication, the global village, the endangered planet, free trade, shared technologies, mass consumerism and the primacy of Western institutions. China by contrast starts from the assumption of a holistic world, with China's central place guaranteed by its longevity and size. According to the concept of the inseparability of one and many or the Theory of Tongbian, Chinese correlative thinking, nations have a common interest in development and globalization is best viewed as a process beyond national borders to which every country must find its own response. It is a process of building a community with a shared future for the whole of mankind based on the harmony of differences. Correspondingly global governance is not a reflex of globalization but the on-going effort to create a shared human future.

It is an unusual privilege for a Chinese and a Western scholar to be invited to make a joint presentation in India about globalization. This is especially humbling if, as is the case, we agree with Amartya Sen that the idea that globalization is Western imperialism, is misleading.

Sen (2006:128-9.) pointed out that the mathematical ideas originating in fifth century India were later first of all received in Arabia, and later still in both China and Europe. He spoke of globalization as an age-old process, fitting a realist definition like that of American political scientist, Joseph Nye (2002:78), namely as “the growth of worldwide networks of interdependence”.

Archaeological evidence of cultural contact means we can trace the growth of interdependence back into the origins of human history. It has continued, at greater or lesser pace, with only temporary interruptions, to the present day. Now the density and frequency of worldwide interactions, trade, knowledge transfer, media and interpersonal communication increases all the time. In that sense globalization is a continuing process taking us to an unknown destination.

However our concern today is not with the real process. We will concentrate on the stories that are composed around it, and in particular when the realities were brought into focus with the term ‘globalization’. Of course there were narratives that anticipated capitalism's drive for and dependence on an ever-expanding world market. This of course remains the case, but

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the invention of the term globalization accompanied a qualitative leap forward in the processes of growing global interdependence.

The founding of the United Nations, consciousness of the globe as a threatened home for the human species, and media technology prompting the imaginary global village provoked a new formulation with worldwide reach within a twenty year period. Nonetheless the neologism that resulted was Western, initially more specifically American English.

It brought with it very soon a heavy weight of Western ideological baggage. For that reason it makes it important to recognise that alternative narratives are available, and indeed can be developed in the future, that reflect growing global interdependence without necessitating the acceptance of a Western worldview.

Chinese and Western Definitions

This then is the reason why on the occasion of our invitation to India we join to speak of alternative narratives of globalization, from China and the West. Some might say, considering the title of our presentation, we ought to speak of ‘Western and Chinese Globalization Narratives’ not ‘Chinese and Western’. Was it not the case that the Western came first?

Only if we’re thinking superficially of the actual term ‘globalization’ and the Chinese translation of that then the objection has some force. The globalization narrative has served as the continuing serial story of our world as a global elite and intellectuals have lived it over the last thirty or forty years. But as we have pointed out it focuses on processes for which Marx and Engels (1981) were only the most notable of earlier Western interpreters.

Considered in that way, the Chinese story has even older roots planted in the centrality of the middle kingdom, the civilized centre on which the rest of the world could look with admiration. By contrast the prehistory of the globalization narrative in the West lies in the restless quest of European peoples to explore and exploit the wider world for their own advantage.

The imperial vision was expansionist. Linked to the jealous God of the Christian religion it was also exclusionary. There was only one way, and it was forward, in the nineteenth century construed as inevitable progress. The Way for China was the cultured life of the enlightened individual.

Considered along with the deeper boundaries and longer directions of the respective civilizations of the West and China concepts like individualism become relative and change their contours. The Western individual may once have been the eighteenth century eccentric, only later becoming the reflex of an ideology where individualism stressing autonomy, independence and self-realization in individuals has become a survival requirement in a capitalist society. In China the physical singularity of each person has been recognised through the centuries even when ground down under impoverished conditions. Individual identity does not exist if separated from society. There is immeasurable correlativity of each individual with others, diversified groups, communities and society as a whole.

The Inaugurations – The ‘Global Village’

Globalization is the latest grand narrative following on from those earlier civilizational premises, developing in conjunction with technological advances in communication and computation. We have to look simultaneously to ideal and material factors to understand the need for a grand narrative that tries to make sense of the totality of human experience of a changing world.

In the West global terminology received a new impetus at the end of the Second World War. Several factors conspired: the sense of an endangered planet after the destruction of the nuclear bombs, the foundation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the growth of worldwide communication media.

When Marshall McLuhan (1964) was inspired to write of the Global Village he invented a phrase that was to go viral and become part of everyday language. Beyond the global it was not long before globalization emerged. In its origin it was little more than the sense of the world becoming connected, in particular in a geopolitical sense.

By the early 1980s the term and the recognition of the globe as a potential single space was accepted widely enough that the business economist Theodore Levitt (1983) easily referenced it in his Harvard Business Review article entitled ‘The Globalization of Markets’. Henceforward the global strategies of multinational corporations could be encompassed under the general heading of globalization. In this case it became a process that was very much matter of corporate choice.

What now deserves much more detailed research is the way corporate globalization, both as strategy and process in the West received impetus since China’s Opening-Up in 1978. The architect of what was to become a transformative factor, not just for China but also for the West, was Deng Xiaoping.

Deng and China’s Opening Up

Under Deng’s leadership experiments in agricultural reform were already under way with the introduction of the household contract responsibility system. Now reform was to extend to industry and trade. Deng’s initiatives were not the whim of an autocrat as it sometimes is represented in the West. On the contrary it sprang from his own international experience and the co-operation of teams of experts charged with exploring the benefits for China of drawing on foreign expertise and models of development.

In October 1978 Deng met journalists from West Germany and spoke of Opening-Up for the first time in discussing how new technology would not endanger Chinese traditions. In the following month he visited Singapore, one of the ‘Four Tigers’ of rising Asian economies.

Then on December 13th Deng gave his speech ‘Emancipating the Mind, Seeking Truth from Facts and Looking Toward the Future in Unity’. It became the main document for debate in the epoch making meeting of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Central Committee.

This marked the beginning of the reform and opening up of China that has continued to this day and changed the geo-political shape of the twenty first century.

A month later on January 29th 1979 Vice-Premier Deng was being entertained in the White House by the United States President Jimmy Carter. At the conclusion of his tour agreements were signed between the US and China on trade and scientific and technological exchanges. On the day after the normalization of ties between the US and China on New Year's Day 1979 Coca Cola had already been given permission to bottle its drinks on the mainland of China.

The overall narrative was not yet globalization. Indeed it engaged with an earlier dominant Western theme, modernization, but it was of a Chinese type. In speeches in 1983 Deng emphasized also that internationalism and patriotism belonged to a socialist country, socialism with Chinese characteristics.

All this was in line with the announcement of opening up in 1978 when the Party Central Committee declared the policy of Four Modernizations, of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology. These modernizations continued to be cited by President Xi Jinping in 2013.

Modernization in the 1970s in the West was a totalizing frame of reference that could be applied to every sector of society. It was promoted as a concept particularly in the context of development, and therefore as a continuation of the maintenance and extension of Western influence over geo-politics and the world economy.

Modernization was both strategy and process. When amplified to the globe as a whole it could be seen as intimately linked with globalization. It was linkage first utilized and developed for social and cultural sciences by sociologist Roland Robertson in the 1980s when he combined his research on religion with the exploration of international systems and modernization.

Sociologists in the West completed the application of the concept of globalization to a multi-sectoral societal accounts when in 1990 they adopted it as a key term for the volume for the World Congress of Sociology entitled *Globalization, Knowledge and Society*. Robertson brought his earlier papers up to date in a definitive statement *Globalization: Social Theory and Culture* in 1992 and in the same year Anthony Giddens (1991) effectively announced the replacement of modernization narratives by globalization in his hugely influential book *The Consequences of Modernity*.

The Totalizing Signature of the Time

Developments in Western political life helped to embed globalization in new ideological formulations drawn from free market economics and sociological accounts like those of Giddens. The 'New Democrats' of American President Bill Clinton from 1993 and 'New Labour' of British Premier Tony Blair from 1997 in consultation with each other conjectured

the possibility of a ‘Third Way,’ a mix of free markets and social democracy that was intended to resolve the contradictions of capitalism and socialism.

The end of the Soviet Union in 1991, the command of the international financial institutions and their application of uniform policies worldwide, (the Washington Consensus) contributed to a Western euphoria that led up to the celebration of the Millennium. It was a climate of opinion notoriously prefigured in Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) book *the End of History* that saw no other future than the triumph of Western liberal institutions.

One of us has tracked the reception of globalization terminology in one of the most influential Western elite opinion shaping publications, *The Economist*, in the years from 1985, when the term appeared twice, to 2010 when there were 118 mentions. 2007 was the highpoint with no less than 280 (Xiaoying, 2012).

Initial mentions in *The Economist* very much mirrored the business world’s understanding of globalization as a business strategy making effective use of new communication technology, both in transportation and in media. In the mid-nineties however it shifted its emphasis to conflate globalization with the original mission of the magazine, namely to promote free trade and liberal views throughout the world. In this respect *The Economist’s* outlook on globalization, as a contemporary restatement of universal truths about free markets and liberal institutions, converged with dominant political orthodoxy in the West.

Globalization became a totalizing narrative. Its most comprehensive expression was contained in American journalist Thomas Friedman’s(1999:6) best-selling book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. The world now had a ‘new system’ and a ‘different framework of international relations’. At the same time Friedman (1999:11) declared that ‘the United States is now the dominant and sole superpower’. It operates not simply through overwhelming military superiority but also because ‘the driving idea behind globalization is free-market capitalism’(1999:8)

The total scope of globalization extended beyond politics. Former American president Bill Clinton saw globalization largely as the spread of American culture and Americanization. In order to win support, he equated globalization with national interests while suggesting it was an inevitable process embracing the whole world. Only at the end of 1999 he looked to appeal to the anti-globalization movement as demonstrations in Seattle caused the suspension of the World Trade Organization meeting².

The nineties witnessed the highpoint of globalization and thus globalization became the master narrative of the age. However, it was interrupted by two events: the abandonment of the previous globalization narrative by the newly installed American president George W. Bush, and secondly the destruction of the World Trade Center by an Islamist group on September 1, 2001.

² see <https://www.britannica.com/event/Seattle-WTO-protests-of-1999>

Globalization often associated with Americanization was out of American control. In the public mind, the twenty first century was defined by Samuel Huntington's (1992) 'clash of civilizations' more than Thomas Friedman's (1999) 'flat world'.

The Theory of Tongbian: The Chinese Approach to Globalization

In the past forty years of reform and opening-up, China has welcomed the Western narrative of globalization, and understood the strategic ideas underlying it, but did not necessarily see it as providing an inevitable direction for the contemporary world.

The opening-up begun by Deng certainly recognised the power and effectiveness of free market economics. In his famous speech at the United Nations in Geneva in 2017, when he advanced the concept of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, Xi applauded the results of UN inspired initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and stated categorically: 'All this demonstrates that economic globalization is generally good'³.

President Xi has frequently referenced economic globalization as a rapidly developing feature of the contemporary world, necessitating co-operation between countries, and closely linked to cultural diversity, multipolarity and the advance of information technology. As such it is clearly a process beyond national boundaries to which every country must find its own response.

That there were resulting problems like the digital divide or unequal development Xi acknowledged, but they were there to be solved. He chose as the relevant Chinese saying: 'One should not stop eating for fear of choking' (Xi, 2017).

What must be clear to Western readers is that the Chinese understanding of economic globalization is quite contrary to any idea that a whole set of institutional and cultural consequences follow that every country must adopt. Paradoxically it has been Western advocates of neo-liberal economics who have been the determinists, not the Marxists they denounce.

Economic globalization for China fits into a narrative with roots in its ancient philosophy of Tongbian, a dialectical, systematic and harmonious way of thinking. Based on this distinct Chinese thinking mode, China's opening-up takes a much more rounded view of the world than globalization. It implies immeasurable correlativity between an individual and any other individual entity, individuals and society as a whole, diverse groups and communities, and humanity and nature etc.

Tongbian consists two Chinese characters: 'tong', meaning to clear away, to open up or to go through a path without obstruction, and thus suggesting continuity, and 'bian', meaning

³ Transcript of Xi speech - <http://iq.chineseembassy.org/eng/zygx/t1432869.htm>

changing in light of difference. For example, the opening of the door and the shutting of the door are two interlocking parts of one whole which may be seen as (an event) of ‘bian’(change), and passing endlessly from one of these states to the other may be seen as ‘tong’(continuity). Tongbian together therefore means continuity through changes.

As professor Roger Ames put it, “In tongbian, differences and similarities are merely polarities of correlativity and continuity, and are not necessarily the cause of duality and conflict. The idea of the ‘harmonious co-existence’ of different civilizations occupying a single world acknowledges first their differences, and then seeks continuity through them.”⁴

The world so defined is one of correlations in which all things are correlated with each others. One and many are, after all, inseparable. Individual identity does not exist if separating from any other individual entity or any social relationships. Globalization so defined is thus a contemporary pursuit of building a shared future for the whole of mankind based on harmony of differences. Having totality means ultimate freedom.

Three more points are made to further illustrate why ancient China developed distinctive correlative thinking or Tongbian theory, also referred to as ‘the inseparability of one and many’ by professor Roger Ames.⁵

First, ancient Chinese believe that all living beings have the same origin. According to Laozi(571-471 BC), founder of Daoism, all things under sky are born of Being (有) or named (有名), the chaotic state of the universe. Being is born of Nonbeing(无) or nameless (无名), the original and formless state of the universe. Ontologically speaking, nonbeing and being, or epistemologically speaking, named and nameless, though differ in name, have the same origin of Nonbeing. Laozi sees it as the ultimate truth.

Second, ancient Chinese believe that all living beings have the same destination. For example, all things return to their roots. Laozi once said: “When things grow profuse, they return to their respective roots”(Wu, 2013:39). In this way, they can find tranquillity, the source of vital energy, and renew themselves. Moreover, all things return to the innocent beginning of life. As Laozi put it, “know the male, but cleave to what is female, be the ravine of the world. Be the ravine of the world, and the Eternal virtue will never leave you, and you will return to infancy.” (p 66). “Know the light, but cleave to what is dark, be the valley of the world, and the Eternal virtue will always satisfy you, and you will return to the pristine timber.” (p 59). In a word, all things ultimately reach for Dao, going back to their humble roots.

Third, ancient Chinese believe in oneness of humanity and universe. The Chinese organic world outlook based on the theory of Tongbian, as compared to the Western mechanistic world outlook, views the world as a whole organic entity, which becomes lifeless once it is

⁴ Roger Ames, *Dialectic of Modern Civilization*, <http://en.yiduobufen.com/index.php/index/moreart/id/67.html>.

⁵ 一多不分概述, <http://www.yiduobufen.com/index.php/index/moreart/id/12.html>.

split up. In the Dao-centered cosmos, the Dao, sky, earth and man are all related. "Man follows the ways of earth; Earth follows the ways of sky; Sky follows the ways of Dao; Dao follows its own way"(p 59). In another instance, Laozi pointed out that everything in the universe, from sky to earth to all beings, will get peace and prosperity when embracing the One or Dao. He said: "look at those in the past who attained the One; Sky, having attained the One, was clear; Earth, having attained the One, was tranquil; The Spirit, having attained the One, was potent; The valleys, having attained the One, were plentiful; All things, having attained the One, were able to live; Lords and kings, having attained the One, set the norm for the world"(p 39).

The theory of Tongbian is thus one which has transcended life, society and even the universe, emphasizing the interconnectedness of life over human self and the harmonious life over self-aggrandizement.

Towards a Global Globalization

Dialectical relations are always generating novel states of affairs. If we put Western economic globalization and Chinese Tongbian thinking together we contribute to a shared future for mankind. But then that future is neither Western nor Chinese, nor indeed Indian or any other particular culture. It is shared by all and belongs to all collectively.

That prospect tends to produce fantasies of world government, inspiring some and terrifying others. But a shared future is not a uniform condition. It allows for, indeed requires each to contribute to the best of their abilities to address common problems that are beyond the capacities of any of them singly to solve. These are the global issues.

We mentioned at the beginning that the very narrative of globalization arose originally out of the prolonged shock that the post second world war experienced. The sense of the globe under threat, first from nuclear weaponry, then from environmental degradation was expressed in media of the global village. The global imaginary bore globalization.

That imaginary was never eliminated. Indeed with the awareness of climate change in the late twentieth century global issues became as much a concern for governments as globalization. The concept of the global age that came into widespread public use at the same time became a rubric for all those efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors to promote world peace, combat global warming, support refugees, defend human rights.

Each one of those efforts, by individuals, organizations and governments to rise to global challenges was a kind of globalization, if one means by that action orientated to the globe. It applied too even to those groups opposed to corporate capitalism in the West, the anti-globalization movements that ironically had to accept that they mobilized globally and hence were agents of globalization.

We found the converse in our study of *The Economist's* Western style globalization thinking. When confronting the issue of climate change it was forced to modify its deep seated hostility to government action and to acknowledge that governmental co-operation was necessary if global warming was to be checked. A global goal modifies commitment to abstract globalization (Xiaoying, 2012:178-231).

Global goals provide precisely the content of a shared future. Globalization in general and the abstract has no direction. When specified, as in economic globalization, it gains concrete reference to real world situations. It can become a vehicle for any culture to use in accord with and to benefit its own values.

In an analogous way the theory of Tongbian does not specify the current conditions to which it can be applied. It offers no blueprint. Yet today in the current world situation its spirit is desperately needed to inspire those wrestling with the terrifying prospects of global warming out of control. Sustainable development is a genuine outcome of the co-operation of multiple agencies working to solve a global issue. Arguably this is true for all sustainable development goals.

Economic globalization and the theory of Tongbian arise out of the cultural experience of two distinct civilizations. But to meet the global challenges we need the contributions of the diverse civilization of India too, and indeed of every culture in the world. What all contribute to in responding to those challenges is a new transcultural reality, that exists by virtue of the contributions of every culture, and ensures their diverse and enduring existence.

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