

China and Globalisation
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There are three short but significant words with which we are all familiar. These have had an effect on our daily lives, consciously or otherwise and have become almost essential to our way of life.

Made in China

At the start of this century China made

- One quarter of the world's toys
- One third of its suitcases
- One eighth of our footwear and clothing

If you are what you buy, one of your grandparents is probably Chinese

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There can be two basic approaches to the topic of China and globalisation

- a) the impact of globalisation on China
- b) the impact of China on globalisation

The second of these cannot be ignored as China has significant factors which will indubitably have influence on a globalised world.

Consider

- China has the largest population of any country in the world; 1.3 billion people, approx 22% of world population. Of these 1.2 billion are Han Chinese and 100 million Minority Peoples. While we consider English to be the dominant world language, Mandarin Chinese is the mother tongue of three times the number of people who have English as a first language.
- China has the second largest economy after the US (depending on how this is calculated, I suspect) and enjoys large trade surpluses with the US, UK and Japan and other major nations
- China has the second largest national evangelical church in the world and is set to become the largest

Since 1980 China has become an increasingly important player on the world stage and continues to rise in prominence in many different arenas of world influence.

- World Trade Organisation membership (1999) will have ramifications for all major trading partners. Chinese exports are running at around 15% increase per year
- In sport China has secured the right to stage the 2008 Olympics. China's presence at the 2002 World Cup, although not a particular success, was considered a major achievement by the nation.
- Chinese culture seems to grow as an interest in the West. Feng shui is now a familiar term to readers of Sunday magazines. Martial arts seem to be in vogue in the film world (The Matrix; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Jackie Chan's films). Tai Chi/qi gong get honourable mentions in the media. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine also get periodic publicity. In our shops fashion fabrics and jewellery feature Chinese characters.
- In the realm of religions Falun Gong has cult-like following in the west, although ironically is vilified in China.
- China has also grown in political power. The country has asserted itself in South China Sea with seizure of disputed territories. There have been major standoffs

with US over Taiwan and spyplanes. China was seen to give tacit approval for recent events in Afghanistan.

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There is also a need to consider the part played by the Chinese overseas.

Ten years ago there were approx two thousand Mainland scholars/students in the UK, by the year 2000 there were ten thousand, probably more. Some of these brought along their families, husbands, wives, children and grandparents.

In the last five years five hundred new scholars/students are reported to have come to the UK each year. This year five thousand are expected!

There are also the Overseas Chinese, who have migrated to most countries across the world from various Asian countries, to consider. Migration from China has been taking place for over 2000 years. There are 60 to 80 million ethnically Chinese outside of China

Take the example of an Overseas Chinese friend

He is

- from HK, lives in UK
- has Mainland Chinese wife
- has a brother in HK
- has a brother in Canada
- has a sister in the States

This seems a typical arrangement for many Overseas Chinese families.

Added to this is the Chinese ability to network. Derived from the system of *Guanxi*, an old boy's network gone global has developed. Assets of the 'Chinese' international economy are said to be worth \$2 trillion.

It is perhaps not unreasonable to suggest that the Chinese invented globalisation long before anyone else had thought of the word?

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Will Hutton, writing in the Guardian, Dec 1999, on China's acceptance into WTO membership noted that... 'China has arrived and the consequences are literally incalculable'

This is most certainly true, and woe betide us if we ignore it....

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