

Research Series on the Chinese Dream
and China's Development Path

Ya'nan Wang · Puning Hao
Ting Liu · Juan Zhao
Yu Fang

Annual Evaluation Report of China's Cultural Consumption Demand



 Springer

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Annual Evaluation Report of China's Cultural Consumption Demand

Gathering contributions by leading social development scholars, this report offers a comprehensive description of the national development of cultural consumption in China. By comparing the annual growth of cultural consumption, GDP growth, per-capita income growth and savings growth, the authors reveal the disparity between urban and rural areas in terms of cultural consumption, as well as that between provinces. Based on an analysis of the status quo of cultural consumption in China, the book explores the road to a prosperous society and enhancing China's cultural development.

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Series Preface

Since China's reform and opening began in 1978, the country has come a long way on the path of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. Over 30 years of reform efforts and sustained spectacular economic growth have turned China into the world's second largest economy and wrought many profound changes in the Chinese society. These historically significant developments have been garnering increasing attention from scholars, governments and the general public alike around the world since the 1990s, when the newest wave of China studies began to gather steam. Some of the hottest topics have included the so-called China miracle, Chinese phenomenon, Chinese experience, Chinese path and the Chinese model. Homegrown researchers have soon followed suit. Already hugely productive, this vibrant field is putting out a large number of books each year, with Social Sciences Academic Press alone having published hundreds of titles on a wide range of subjects.

Because most of these books have been written and published in Chinese, readership has been limited outside China – even among many who study China – for whom English is still the lingua franca. This language barrier has been an impediment to efforts by academia, business communities and policy-makers in other countries to form a thorough understanding of contemporary China, of what is distinct about China's past and present may mean not only for her future but also for the future of the world. The need to remove such an impediment is both real and urgent, and the *Research Series on the Chinese Dream and China's Development Path* is my answer to the call.

This series features some of the most notable achievements from the last 20 years by scholars in China in a variety of research topics related to reform and opening. They include both theoretical explorations and empirical studies, and cover economy, society, politics, law, culture and ecology, the six areas in which reform and opening policies have had the deepest impact and farthest-reaching consequences for the country. Authors for the series have also tried to articulate their visions of the "Chinese Dream" and how the country can realize it in these fields and beyond.

All the editors and authors for the *Research Series on the Chinese Dream and China's Development Path* are both long-time students of reform and opening and recognized authorities in their respective academic fields. Their credentials and expertise lend credibility to these books, each of which having been subject to a rigorous peer-review process for inclusion in the series. As part of the Reform and Development Programme under the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China, the series is published by Springer, a Germany-based academic publisher of international repute, and distributed overseas. I am confident that it will help fill a lacuna in studies of China in the era of reform and opening.

Xie Shouguang

Preface

The year 2000 was a turning point in the development course of modern China. This was not because of its significance in the Western calendar, where it marks the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of a new millennium; rather it was significant because it was, in the course of China's unique history, the year that marked the realization of a "Basically Prosperous Society" and the starting point of the next leg of China's journey towards a "Fully Prosperous Society". According to the traditional concept of "prosperity" that has prevailed in China for thousands of years, its complete achievement involves two steps, the realization of "sufficiency", followed by hints of "affluence". From "Basic Prosperity" to "Full Prosperity", the "two-step" process of China's modernization has captured the spirit of the "Chinese Dream", with all its rich and deep cultural import. It is in this process of moving from "Basic Prosperity" to "Full Prosperity" that China has realized its transformation from a traditional to a modern society.

The modern transformation of Chinese society has had two prominent markers: one is the construction and gradual improvement of the market economy system which has brought continued growth in the Chinese economy for several years, integrating the global market economy system effectively and deeply affecting the Chinese economy, society and lifestyle in every aspect; the second marker is the construction and steady progress of the systems of public finance, public service and social security – the society is public, the government is public, finances are public and so the government's primary responsibility is to provide public services and basic social security for the whole of society. These two aspects are inevitably linked, because a complete market economy system must be accompanied by a sound social security system. In the process of implementing, in the face of the international financial crisis, the national policy of "stimulating domestic demand, broadening consumption and improving the livelihood of its people", Chinese society fully became aware of this point.

In the past, China has had a tradition of formulating an economic plan every 10 years, whereby all production and consumption was carried out in accordance with the plan, and provisions were organized according to the plan. After the

transference to a market economy system, Chinese economic development has faced a long-term difficulty of lack of domestic demand, especially in the case of the growth of cultural production being restricted by the insufficiency in cultural consumption demands. The reason for this was the lag in construction of a social security system. If we say that the driving force in the substance of economic development in manufacturing is still reliant on the so-called triumvirate, and that besides investment and domestic demand, there is also foreign demand; then the driving force behind the development of cultural industry, besides investment, basically can only rely on foreign demand.

Due to social traditions, the Chinese public generally maintains the classic characteristic of a traditional agricultural society, which goes along with the notion of "relying on the weather for sustenance", which leads to unpredictability year after year. The idea that "the heavens call the shots" makes future livelihoods difficult to grasp, and Chinese people focus on saving extra money, leading to a high rate of savings in Chinese society. While social safeguards are not sufficient, the public must focus more on saving money, leading to measures of self-protection, such as funds for purchasing a home, funds for children's education, funds for sickness and old age and similar situations. That is to say, that in addition to maintaining a level of essential expenses, Chinese people also prepare for savings for future contingencies. This situation is bound to suppress a broadening step in consumption, as necessary consumption remains fixed, with spiritual and cultural consumption inevitably being the first to be left aside. Therefore, within the scope of the Chinese nation, the public's cultural consumption status grows negatively in relation to the growth in savings.

The valuable lessons China learned from the international financial crisis is that the country should focus on "stimulating domestic demand, expanding consumption and improving livelihoods" within the socialist market economy system. These points should become basic Chinese long-term national policies followed in the construction of the Chinese-style socialist economy and the construction of culture and society. This has become the basic idea behind the national Twelfth Five-Year Plan. Developments in the cultural domain raise the level of scientific development and should adhere more to the concept of "people first" and the basic principles of making quality of life an equal priority; stimulating domestic cultural demand, broadening cultural consumption, improving culture and quality of life and using the promotion of socialist cultural development to satisfy the cultural needs of the urban and rural populations on a broader scale.

Within the socialist market economy system, the so-called demands are mainly shown as consumer demands, including the most basic needs for food, clothing and shelter; it makes a little sense, therefore, to talk about "meeting demands" outside of consumer demands. Cultural development that takes "meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the public as a starting and ending point" needs to be translated into promoting consumption across urban and rural areas and allowing all to share in the benefits. In order to measure the effects of cultural development and production through the increase in popular consumer demands, is not only necessary – the results of cultural development must be implemented if the cultural consumption

demands of residents of rural and urban areas, something which is also feasible – among cultural production and cultural consumption there is an interaction of supply and demand which cannot be avoided. The ultimate power of cultural production can only come from popular cultural consumption needs, and cultural production's actual results can only be verified if they meet cultural consumption demands.

The essence of continuing to deepen cultural reform and mechanisms for innovation lies in bringing the cultural manufacturing industry completely into a unified socialist market economy system; changing from a plan-based orientation to a market-based orientation; from a manufacturing orientation to a consumer orientation; from a goal of supply to a goal of demand. The space for development of China's culture industry must be brought out by the enhancement of "endogenous power", and more so should be implemented from its own "starting and ending point". The development of the culture industry and the enhancement of cultural consumption should form good relations of coordinated growth of supply and demand. In the process of fully constructing a prosperous society, the results of cultural development cannot just be measured by per capita "cultural GDP". Promoting cultural industry as a pillar of the national economy is just a means; enhancing and satisfying the cultural consumption demand of the populace is the ultimate goal; the "GDP culture chase" stemming from "GDP worship" must stop.

Yunnan, China
March 26, 2014

Wang Ya'nan

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Ten other members of the SSAP staff have been intimately involved, primarily in the capacity of in-house editor, in the preparation of the Chinese manuscripts. It is time-consuming work that requires attention to details, and each of them has done this and is continuing to do this with superb skills. They are, in alphabetical order: Mr. Cai Jihui, Ms. Liu Xiaojun, Mr. Ren Wenwu, Ms. Shi Xiaolin, Ms. Song Yuehua, Mr. Tong Genxing, Ms. Wu Dan, Ms. Yao Dongmei, Ms. Yun Wei and Ms. Zhou Qiong. In addition, Xie Shouguang and Li Yanling have also taken part in this work.

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