

General preface to the Global China Dialogues Proceedings series

Martin Albrow

In this time of turmoil, when the world political order is so fragmented and the fate of our species is in question as never before, dialogue may seem a less than practical way to find solutions to global issues.

In fact, dialogue is the absolutely essential precondition for the cooperation that alone can produce the changes the world requires. No country on its own, however powerful, is up to the task and only the power that collective action generates can be adequate.

But even the most powerful actors have to be persuaded that there is a common task in which all must play their part. The rise of China means there is a new candidate for a global leadership role. For that reason, the rest of the world needs to appreciate what China can contribute, and China owes it to the world to explain how it will make a difference. That can only be done through dialogue.

The Global China Dialogues invite Chinese scholars, scientists, entrepreneurs and public figures to share their insights on global issues with their counterparts in other countries and to debate with them how best to go forward in partnership.

They will converge on problems of climate change, migration, poverty, inequality, justice, rights, trafficking, corruption and the whole range of issues that good governance of the globe must cover, and they will do so from multiple perspectives.

The participants in these dialogues will not come exclusively from one discipline, profession or sector. They will not be required to represent an official viewpoint of any kind, though they will be free to do so. What they will share is a commitment to working with colleagues from other cultures and the conviction that cultural divides can be bridged in a common cause.

Professor Xiangqun Chang shares that conviction and has demonstrated her commitment to the cause by initiating the Global China Dialogues and bringing together the voices of the contributors in this volume of proceedings. Her innovative energy and their fresh and uninhibited engagement combine to demonstrate to the world the rich potential of Chinese perspectives on global issues juxtaposed with those of their international counterparts.

Introduction to the Global China Dialogue Series (GCDs)

Martin Albrow and Xiangqun Chang

World in Turmoil

The road to peace and development is strewn with numerous risks and challenges. The international system and order are constantly changing, and there are profound changes in the balance of power. All countries, whether developing or developed, are having to adapt to this ever-shifting international and social environment, while the process of modernization in some countries has been interrupted or has spilled out to create global turmoil as a result of the conflicts and contradictions brought about by cultural, religious and social transformation.

At the same time, rapid developments in technology and society have had a profound impact on patterns of thinking, behaviour and interaction and on the moral principles of different countries and groups. They have also constantly challenged established ideas of good governance, including the functions of government in the globalization era and the pros and cons of the participation of non-government organizations.

The changes and challenges are myriad: digital technology, mobile communications and the popularization of the internet, the coexistence of cultural homogenization and diversity, ethnic and religious conflicts, the collision between giant multinational corporations and national sovereignty, changes in social norms as a result of scientific innovations, the decisive influence of regional economies on national economic development, the constraints of climate change and the discovery and adoption of new energy sources. Cultural diversity and transculturalism have become part of people's daily life.

Confronted with such challenges, national leaders devise development strategies that reflect both the status quo and their long-term goals. Business leaders and entrepreneurs also invest substantial resources in studying the impact of the changing international economy and financial order on the development of enterprises. Experts and scholars focus on the efficiency of global governance and cultural factors that have quietly exerted great influence, and explore how culture and ideology enhance global and social governance.

Such efforts and initiatives are moves in the same direction: towards reaching an in-depth understanding of the knowledge systems of the human community and the development of a 'global cultural sphere' beyond any single culture, state or nationality, under the condition of global governance. Thus, the theme of the development and governance of China, Europe and the world has gradually become one of the key research interests of scholars worldwide.

China in a Changing World

China and the Chinese people are currently making an important contribution to the world order and shaping a global society. What are the important global issues that concern China? What are the Chinese ways of thinking and doing things with respect to global issues? We wish to engage Western audiences in dialogues on topics that arise from these questions, including development, education, economics, migration, the family, the environment, public health, human security and global governance.

For nearly three decades, China has been implementing a 'going out' (走出去) policy to encourage its enterprises to invest overseas. The policy embraces not only the economy but also finance, language, culture, sciences, technology, social sciences, publishing and the media, and under its provisions an international investment bank (亚投行) has been established.

Through his visits to 55 countries, President Xi Jinping himself has promoted the Belt and Road (B&R一带一路) global development strategy and China's governance model (治国理政). In his visit to the UK in 2015, he said 'As our capabilities grow, we shall shoulder more responsibilities to the best of our ability and contribute China's wisdom and strength to the world's economic growth and global governance.' In his keynote speech at the United Nations Office in Geneva in 2017 Xi Jinping clarified the basic principles of China's participation in global governance. They are stay committed to building a world of lasting peace through dialogue and consultation, build a world of common security for all through joint efforts, build a world of common prosperity through win-win cooperation, build an open and inclusive world through exchanges and mutual learning, and make our world clean and beautiful by pursuing green and low-carbon development.

The Global China Dialogue Series (GCDs)

In order to jointly build the human destiny community, dialogue is inessentially needed between China and the world on the above mentioned range of common concerns that our mankind faces. The Global China Dialogue series of forums (GCDs) focuses on these issues to enhance public understanding of current global affairs and common interests through public dialogue and discussion between Chinese and non-Chinese academics, experts, professionals and practitioners and interested laypeople, from interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives.

In addition to universities, research institutions and professional think tanks, the GCDs also work closely with Chinese and other governments, international organizations, media and publishing units to track global hot topics over the long term period, engaging China and the Chinese in issues of global governance and arriving at better responses to its new challenges, including mutually beneficial cooperation and possibilities for symbiosis, co-existence and prosperity through transcultural dialogue and collaboration. They provide a high-end platform for the global public interests of China and Chinese participation in building global society and comprehensive governance of global society.

The GCDs are an ongoing social creative activity, which brings Chinese and Western scholars and opinion leaders together in an ongoing project in social creativity, exploring transculturality and cultural generativity, contributing to the development of a 'global cultural sphere' beyond any single culture, state or nationality.

The GCDs also develop the rules of 'civilized dialogue', encouraging both sides to listen to the other, understand cultural differences, respect local customs, accept different perspectives and acknowledge the common destiny of humanity. In particular, they explore new global governance, encompassing national governments, international organizations, multinational companies, NGOs and citizens, with a mission to build a harmonious, symbiosis-based human society with a common future.

The past and future programme of the series have been developed by continuing to work within the framework of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which accord with UNESCO's mission of defending peace and the conditions for building sustainable development world through creative intelligence, as follows:

2014 GCD I	The experience of China's modernization from a comparative perspective
2015 GCD II	Transculturality and New Global Governance
2016 GCD III	Sustainability and Global Governance for Climate Change
2017 GCD IV	The Belt and Road (B&R) - Transcultural Cooperation for Shared Goals
2018 GCD V	Governance for Global Justice
2019 GCD VI	Governance for World Peace
2020 GCD VII	Reforming Global Governance

The Organizers

The GCDs were founded by CCPN Global (China in Comparative Perspective Network), YES Global (Young Entrepreneur Society Global) and UVIC Group in 2014. The GCDs are now organized by Global China Institute (Charity No.: 1154640; an affiliate member of the Academy of Social Sciences)¹ in partnership with the Lau China Institute, King's College London, the China Media Centre of the University of Westminster, and Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China (RDCY), China.

Global China Institute has an overall mission of bringing comparisons with China into a worldwide conversation for the benefit of all. With its network (CCPN Global), the *Journal of China in Comparative Perspective* (JCCP), publications and its thinktank, the GCDs engaged broadly and work cooperatively, based on existing studies and activities, to promote an all-round concepts of 'transculturality' and 'social creativity', to push them from a marginal position towards the centre of mainstream discourse among academics, intellectuals and thinkers worldwide.

Official recognition came when GCD II became the only event to have a global and social scientific focus in the government designated 2015 Year of UK-China Cultural Exchange with the theme 'Transculturality and New Global Governance'. It has received enthusiastic support from the Cultural Office of the Chinese Embassy to the UK, the Ministry of Culture of China, the British Council, the British Sociological Association, the Chinese Association of World Politics Studies, academic institutions and all the supporters and sponsors that are participating in this event. The GCDs showcase transcultural practice on global issues and governance by organizing events collaboratively between academia, government, international organizations and NGOs.

Ultimately, our goals are to bring Chinese and Western thinkers together in debate and research that will generate shared endeavours to create a world that benefits all humankind, and to provide both an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the history of our era and accurate forecasts of trends in the development of human society.

¹ Editor's note: The Global China Institute was renamed to the Global China Academy in 2018, and was restructured into an worldwide fellowship in 2021, and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO, registration number: 1198983, the previous registration number 1154640 has been cancelled. For related content, see: <https://globalchinaacademy.org/global-china-academy-embarks-new-chapter-cio-status-preserves-history-online/>).