Visual Culture and Consumerism in China’s New Public Spaces

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The Complex Face of Globalization In China
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Transnational China Project: Globalization and The Media of Collective Identity

- How will the increased circulation of people, commodities, capital, ideas and technologies affect how people identify with each other?
- What are the media of collective identity formation in the context of globalization?
- With whom will people identify in the context of globalization?
Subway Advertising in Asian Cities

- Advertising as an under-studied medium in social theory and empirical studies of collective identity formation
- Surveys of subway and outdoor advertisements from 1998-2003 in Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore and Taipei (and eventually Fukuoka, Kaohsiung, Osaka, Tokyo and Seoul) suggest we can use them to explore identification with local, national and transnational imaginaries
- Future research and obstacles
Advertisements may “pre-figure” (Abbas) other media in public discourse by limiting the range of issues and language, as well as the forms of presentation: this unique agenda setting role may result from targeting younger generations, and by their ability to connect media forms produced and consumed by organizations and individuals who do not often otherwise associate, especially translocal.
Ads in New Public Spaces

- Ads target young women in particular
- Ads emphasize youth culture
- Subway ads are part of multi-media campaigns, below and above ground
- Ads portray individuals and lifestyles that are distinctly transnational
- Ads portray Chinese cities as global cities, but draw upon local and national histories in text and imagery
## Shanghai Subway Advertisements by Product Category, 1998 to 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>%1998</th>
<th>%1999</th>
<th>%2000</th>
<th>%2001</th>
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<td>Cosmetics and Fashion</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Food and Drink</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Household Appliances</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Medicine</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>(No. Public Service)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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加强合作促进亚太地区经济发展

Promote Economic Development in the Asia-Pacific Region through Cooperation
全面贯彻“三个代表”重要思想，为首都率先基本实现现代化而努力奋斗
Advertisements in new public spaces redefine public and private space: they not only seem to discuss other public goods, they are themselves public goods requiring government regulation and yet providing opportunities for personal profit.

Public service advertisements in Chinese cities have developed in format to match sophistication in commercial ads.

Public service ads in Chinese cities do not yet include non-Chinese NGOs, competing political organizations, religious organizations, but are portraying social problems.

Privatization of propaganda has led to piggy-backing, which may confuse audiences.
依法纳税
是现代文明的标志
上海市税务局四分局
上海金鹤广告有限公司 制作
首都市民文明公约

为加强首都社会主义精神文明建设，进一步提高首都人民素质，增强首都文明意识，在以江泽民同志为核心的党中央领导下，把首都建设成为现代化国际大都市，特制订本公约。

一、热爱祖国 热爱北京 爱朋友 爱宠物 爱护安全
二、遵守纪律 遵守法规 勤俭节约 遵守节约
三、注重卫生 讲究卫生 绿化首都 保护环境
四、关心集体 爱护公物 热心公益 保护文物
五、崇尚科学 重视教育 自强不息 提高素质
六、敬老爱幼 关心群众 尊重妇女 助人为乐
七、移风易俗 健康生活 计划生育 增强体质
八、举止文明 礼待宾客 胸襟大度 助人为乐

本公约由1995年1月1日起施行，经群众参与讨论，最后在首都北京生活的每一个人自觉遵守。

首都精神文明建设委员会
一九九五三年三月
从细微处入手 不断提高市民素质

今天您让一小步 城市文明就进一大步
请您先下后上 文明乘车
不論遊戲 不論工作
不論種族膚色
人人應有平等機會

Equal opportunities for all
Irrespective of race and colour

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
拒絕貪污病毒入侵！

Anti-Corruption
縱橫天下，四海稱雄 加入海軍，一次擁有

海軍各級部隊招募中，詳情洽：
國軍人才招募中心：0800000050
海軍總部招募組：(02) 25321373
海軍官校招生中心：(07) 5855493
說好話・做好事・存好心
日日行「三好」・人生更美好
捷運輕軌生活加分
區域輕軌捷運路網催生者
(士林、北投) 台北市議員陳忠政
8 陳政忠
請支持
Social Theory and Advertising in New Public Spaces

- If advertising formats in the new public spaces of globalizing cities in Asia are used as models, they may have long-term influence on the nature of public discourse in future urbanizing populations in Asia and elsewhere, including notions of public and private space.
Unexplored Areas and Future Research

- Interviews with producers of advertisements: their background, values and goals as individuals and organizations
- Comparing messages across Asian cities: is there circulation of advertising campaigns? Who circulates?
- Comparing messages with those in other new public spaces: urban commercial spaces and virtual public spaces
- Comparing psychological influence of new public spaces across Asian cities: orientation; violence, the body, personal space and the personalization of public space; entertainment, education and spectatorship
- Urbanite surveys: People pay attention to subway advertisements, but do they pay attention to the content? Are they confused by competing appeals, and the mix of political and commercial?