

China's National Public Cultural Security Construction under the Cultural Differences Between East and West

Jiaqi Cao^{1,a,*}

¹*University for the Creative Arts, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BE, United Kingdom*

a. 2572330522@qq.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: Since Hu Huilin's concept of China's national cultural security was proposed, it has inspired many qualitative studies, and then Han Yuan's team introduced quantitative research methods in 2021. On this basis, this study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis to explore the current situation, challenges, and coping strategies of China's national cultural security, especially the impact of cultural differences between Chinese and Western cultures on China's cultural security in the context of globalisation. It also conducts a data-driven comparative study using Hofstede's National Culture Model and existing national cultural security assessment indicator systems. The analysis focuses on six cultural dimensions, including power distance, individualism masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence. The findings suggest that China differs significantly from the West in terms of individualism and long-term orientation, which has important implications for China's cultural policies and social structures. China's power distance and relatively low uncertainty avoidance index provide opportunities for the development of cultural innovation and diversity. Moreover, the balance between indulgence and restraint is equally important in preserving cultural diversity and promoting social harmony.

Keywords: China, National Public Cultural Security, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis, National Cultural Security Assessment Indicator System

1. Introduction

Since Hu Huilin's study first put forward the concept of China's national cultural security, the academic achievements of many scholars have been in-depth studies of its basic connotation, value function and problem challenges, but these studies have focused on qualitative analyses, i.e., humanistic methodology [1]. In 2021, scholars such as Han Yuan systematically constructed a set of indicators for assessing the country's cultural security based on quantitative analyses, which explicitly pointed out the structural dilemma of public cultural security of a declining trend in its dynamic development [2]. Based on this new interdisciplinary research material, further comparative analyses with other relevant quantitative analytical frameworks as well as corresponding methodological studies are almost non-existent. To fill this gap, this study focuses on the current situation, challenges and coping strategies of China's national public cultural security. It also examines how it deals with the impact of East-West cultural differences in the context of globalisation, particularly on the six cultural dimensions of power distance (PDI), individualism (IDV) and masculinity (MAS),

uncertainty avoidance (UAI), long-term orientation (ITOWVS), and permissiveness (IVR). The primary research methods included quantitative and qualitative analyses. Quantitative analyses used an existing system of indicators for assessing national cultural security and a data-driven comparative study in conjunction with Hofstede's National Cultural Model [3]. Qualitative analyses used a positivist approach to explore the theoretical underpinnings of cultural security and to assess the impact of different cultural strategies on national cultural security. The significance of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the current status of China's national cultural security, and to provide theoretical and empirical support for the formulation and adjustment of cultural security strategies. It also helps to promote more effective cultural security management, facilitate the balance between cultural pluralism and openness, add new perspectives to the academic discussion of national cultural security, and promote theoretical development and practical innovation in this field.

2. Assessment methodology

The research is based on the dimension data matrix of its 2015 edition, and based on the completeness and representativeness of its database, three typical Western developed countries, namely the United States (USA) (see Figure 2), France (FRA) (see Figure 3) and Australia (AUL) (see Figure 4), located in the Americas, Europe and Oceania, are selected as comparison objects for China (CHI) (see Figure 1) [4]. When comparing the differences between their six dimensions and China's, the sum of the differences is aggregated, where positive numbers represent the sum of the numbers that China's values are higher than, and negative numbers represent the sum of the numbers that China's values are lower than (see Table 1).

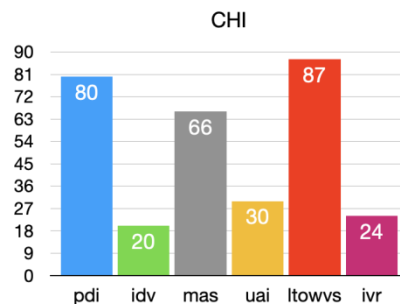


Figure 1: China's six dimensions in the dimension data matrix [4]

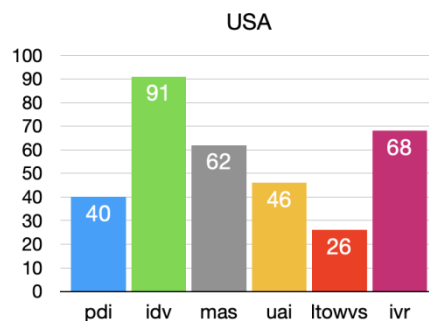


Figure 2: United States' six dimensions in the dimension data matrix [4]

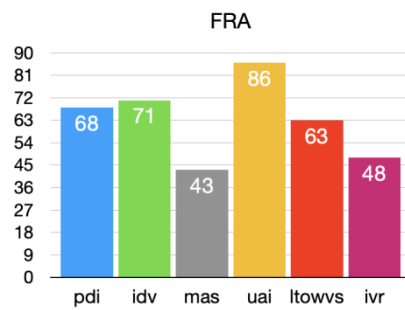


Figure 3: France's six dimensions in the dimension data matrix [4]

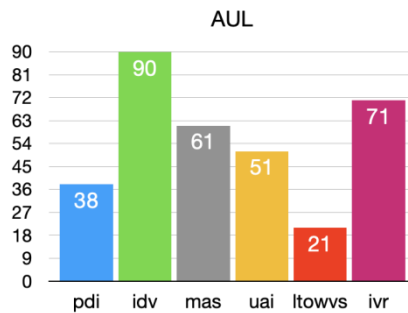


Figure 4: Australia's six dimensions in the dimension data matrix [4]

Table 1: Sum of the dimensional differences [4]

six dimensions	dimension data matrix
pdi	94
idv	-192
mas	32
uai	-93
ltowvs	151
ivr	-115

3. National Public Cultural Security Construction under the Cultural Differences between East and West

3.1. Power Distance

The generally high power distance index in China, as in other Asian countries [5], indicates the deep roots of power and hierarchy in the social structure. This cultural trait requires special attention in building national public cultural security to address the challenges and opportunities it presents.

Within the framework of public cultural security, attention must be paid to the transparency and balance of power structures. While the existence of power hierarchies can, to a certain extent, contribute to the concentration and management of resources, an excessive concentration of power can lead to an uneven distribution of cultural resources and to "cultural misinterpretation"[6].

Therefore, policy makers need to consider how to achieve a rational distribution and control of power while maintaining social stability. Large power gaps can lead to cultural rifts between the upper and lower levels of society. The establishment of national public cultural security should promote cultural exchange and understanding between different social strata, and increase attention to and satisfaction of the cultural needs of grassroots and marginalised groups as a means of promoting cultural diversity and inclusiveness. To meet the challenges posed by high power distance, cultural policies need to be more flexible and adaptable to better respond to societal changes and public needs. This includes funding cultural activities, supporting cultural programmes and preserving cultural heritage.

Strengthening the participation and awareness of all citizens in cultural life, especially in public decision-making processes[7], is an important way to reduce 'cultural misinterpretation' and social fragmentation caused by power hierarchies.

3.2. Individualism

In Hofstede's cultural dimension, the gap between individualism and collectivism has an important impact on national public cultural security. The significant gap in individualism in China compared to the Western reference countries (the sum of the differences is -192) reveals several key points to focus on in cultural security strategies:

Due to the strong collectivism that characterises Chinese culture, national public cultural security strategies need to gradually introduce a focus on individual rights and freedoms while strengthening collective interests [8]. This includes raising awareness of individual rights in education, law and social policy, and encouraging the development of individual expression and creativity.

Under the influence of individualistic values, China faces the challenge of adapting to individualistic cultural trends. This requires the country to place more emphasis on individual rights and freedoms in its foreign policy and international exchanges to promote cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. Some elements of individualism, such as individual creativity and innovation, are crucial to the prosperity and development of cultural industries [8]. Policy formulation should consider how to encourage and protect individual innovation and artistic expression.

3.3. Masculinity

The gap between China and the referenced Western countries in the cultural dimensions of masculinity and femininity is relatively small (the sum of the differences is +32), indicating relative proximity in terms of gender roles and values. This phenomenon has important implications for the construction of national public cultural security.

The similarity between China and the West on this dimension means that China can learn from the West's experience in dealing with gender roles and values, especially in promoting gender equality and diversity. This balance can help promote cultural inclusiveness and pluralism, as well as social cohesion.

3.4. Uncertainty Avoidance

The low uai in Chinese culture indicates that society has a high degree of acceptance and adaptability to new things and changes. This characteristic is of great significance in the construction of national public cultural security.

As a result of lower uncertainty avoidance, China can be more open to encouraging innovation and accepting change in its cultural policies and practices. This includes support for new art forms, cultural expressions and the use of technology in cultural industries, such as digital art and online content creation.

Low uncertainty avoidance also implies greater tolerance for unstructured environments with different cultural backgrounds and lifestyles [9], which contributes to the promotion of cultural diversity and inclusion in the country. This is essential for building a pluralistic and open society and helps to increase national understanding and respect for different cultures. In the context of pluralism, a low uncertainty avoidance index allows China to adapt more flexibly to changes in the international environment and to respond effectively to the cultural challenges posed by globalisation, such as barriers to intercultural communication and international cultural clashes.

3.5. Long Term Orientation

The long-termism dimension of Chinese culture differs significantly from that of the Western reference countries, with a sum of differences of +151. This suggests that China differs significantly from these countries in its cultural values of long-term planning and future orientation. Long-termism, as a core characteristic of Chinese culture, plays a crucial role in the construction of national public cultural security. This emphasis on long-term planning and future development influences and shapes China's cultural security strategy on many levels.

The long-term perspective has led China to emphasise the preservation of its long-standing cultural heritage and historical traditions [10]. Through long-term planning and investment, China is committed to the preservation and transmission of this cultural heritage, ensuring that it can be appreciated and learned from over time and by future generations. In terms of cultural industries, the long-term approach is reflected in investment in the continued development and future potential of the cultural market. The Chinese government encourages and supports the innovation and development of cultural industries such as digital media, animation, and online culture while ensuring that the development of these industries is in line with the country's cultural strategy and social values.

Long-termism can also be embodied in the field of cultural education, which aims to foster a deeper understanding and awareness of local cultures and a more tolerant character and appreciation of other cultures of the world. In the case of social education, it may involve the public media and various social activities that build a wider ecology of cultural knowledge. At the international level, the principle of long-termism guides China's pursuit of long-term cooperation and win-win relations in cultural exchanges and diplomacy. China actively participates in international cultural organisations to promote cultural diversity and dialogue, while strengthening cultural ties and mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative [11]. Long-term countries also have potential problems, such as a tendency to judge artistic and cultural products on the basis of morality rather than law, so that their legislation lags behind and the basis for judgement is relatively more ambiguous [12]. Highly effective basic cultural laws urgently need to be supplemented and updated.

3.6. Indulgence

In building national public cultural security, the balance between indulgence and restraint is crucial. China's traditional tendency to be more restrained is reflected in its emphasis on cultural traditions, social order and collective interests. However, with rapid social change and deepening globalisation, appropriate permissiveness, i.e., the encouragement of individual freedom and innovation, has become a necessary complement [13].

A high degree of restraint can limit cultural diversity and the capacity for innovation. In the context of globalisation, an appropriate degree of laissez-faire can help promote diversified cultural development and innovation. This not only enriches Chinese culture but also enhances the country's attractiveness and influence in international cultural exchanges.

While maintaining social stability, the laissez-faire strategy can stimulate individual creativity and autonomy, and give more impetus to society. The implementation of such a strategy requires a careful balance between safeguarding the harmony of society as a whole and giving individuals enough space to realise their potential. In developing national policies for public cultural security, consideration must be given to how to provide sufficient space for cultural expression, artistic creation and intellectual inquiry, and to ensure the vitality of the cultural market [14], while preserving the necessary social order and cultural traditions. Legal frameworks and policies should both protect cultural heritage and promote cultural diversity and innovation.

4. Discussion

Against the backdrop of the inextricable link between cultural security and cultural sovereignty in modern society, the issue of cultural security is in the midst of a major multi-layered discussion about the changes in China's cultural thinking and external game. China's national cultural development still faces a tense dichotomy between China and the West, local and international, traditional and modern, inheritance and innovation, academic and commercial, etc., while lacking sufficient self-confidence. Economic globalisation, post-colonial culture, consumer culture and pre-modern, modern and post-modern agrarian society, industrial society, information society, post-epidemic era, national imperialism and nationalism, and the volatile international situation, etc., have created a pluralistic context that is both divided and continuous, open and intertwined.

China's current historical context has reached the turning point of value and cultural pluralism, and the question is: what is the basis of cultural creation in this new historical context? Obviously, it cannot be separated from individual spiritual experience, independent expression of thought, heterogeneous and diverse life experiences, and the possibility of realising personal values. So where is the core of contemporary Chinese cultural construction, and what kind of cultural resources can be unearthed, opened up, and fully released? A sense of cultural security based on pluralistic contexts urgently needs to be reconstructed, and the country's cultural construction is at the crossroads of searching for the resonance of a new era.

5. Conclusion

Focusing on the current situation, challenges and coping strategies of China's national cultural security, this study analyses in depth the implications of the six cultural dimensions in the national cultural model. By comparing China's comparative arguments on these dimensions with those of the other three countries, this study reveals the cultural security challenges that China faces in the context of globalisation, as well as the possible ways and effects of coping with these challenges. The study finds that China differs significantly from the West in terms of power distance and individualism, which influence the country's cultural policies and social structures. At the same time, China's long-termism and relatively low uncertainty avoidance index provide opportunities for cultural innovation and diversity to flourish. Moreover, the balance between permissiveness and constraints is equally important for preserving cultural diversity and promoting social harmony.

However, there are some limitations to this study. First, the study is mainly based on Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, which may not fully cover the complexity and dynamics of Chinese culture. Future studies may consider combining more cultural theories and models and drawing on more relevant quantitative and qualitative analyses, to obtain a more comprehensive perspective and deeper considerations. Second, this study mainly relies on existing literature and theoretical analyses, and future research can further verify and deepen the results of theoretical analyses through primary research or specific case studies. Therefore, the construction of China's national cultural security

remains a multifaceted and complex process that needs to be flexibly adjusted according to social changes and the development of the international environment.

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