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Building Theory Through Learning, Empowering with Strategy: *Decoding China's Path in Cultural Trade under the Belt and Road Initiative*

—A Review of *Research on China's Foreign Cultural Trade under the Belt and Road Initiative*

Wang Zhen, Yang Hui

Abstract: In recent years, the Belt and Road Initiative has steadily advanced and achieved remarkable results. As a vital component of smooth trade flows, cultural trade holds unique significance for the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. This paper, set against the backdrop of the Belt and Road era, provides a detailed analysis—both qualitative and quantitative—of Professor Chen Baifu's book, *Research on China's Foreign Cultural Trade under the Belt and Road Initiative*. Grounded in trade theory and supported by comprehensive macro- and micro-level empirical research, the study focuses on examining the state of cultural trade among countries jointly building the Belt and Road. Furthermore, it systematically traces the evolution of China's foreign cultural trade policies over the past 40 years of reform and Opening-up. Drawing insights from these policy shifts, the paper delves into the challenges confronting China's expanding

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cultural trade under the Belt and Road framework, offering practical and actionable recommendations. In particular, it presents a systematic exploration of viable pathways for advancing China's foreign cultural trade in the future.

Keywords: Cultural Trade; The Belt and Road Initiative; Cultural Economy; Foreign Cultural Trade Policy

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标题：以学理建构，以战略赋能：解读“一带一路”倡议下的中国文化贸易路径——评《“一带一路”背景下我国对外文化贸易研究》

摘要：近年来，“一带一路”倡议扎实推进、成效显著。作为贸易畅通的重要组成部分，文化贸易对于“一带一路”建设具有独特意义。本文立足“一带一路”的时代背景，对陈柏福教授所著《“一带一路”背景下我国对外文化贸易研究》一书进行了质性与量化相结合的细致剖析。该研究以贸易理论为基础，通过宏观与微观层面的综合实证研究，聚焦于剖析“一带一路”共建国家文化贸易的发展现状，并系统梳理了改革开放四十年来我国对外文化贸易政策的演变轨迹。基于政策变迁的启示，本文深入探讨了在“一带一路”框架下我国文化贸易拓展面临的现实挑战，提出了切实可行的对策建议，尤其对未来推动我国对外文化贸易的发展路径进行了系统探索。

关键词：文化贸易；“一带一路”；文化经济；对外文化贸易政策

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I. Research Background and Significance

In September 2013, during his visit to Kazakhstan, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the establishment of a new regional cooperation model, by jointly building the “Silk Road Economic

Belt". One month later, in Indonesia, President Xi again called for creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and construction of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". These proposals are officially termed as the "One Belt & One Road Initiative" (OBOR) or the "Belt & Road Initiative" (BRI)¹. At a critical juncture in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, cultural trade acts as a bridge connecting civilizations and fostering mutual understanding and consensus. As important link, the quality of its development directly determines the depth and breadth of "people-to-people connectivity". Professor Chen Baifu's book, *Research on China's Foreign Cultural Trade under the Belt and Road Initiative* (hereafter referred to as "this book"), builds upon the outcomes of a National Social Science Fund project. It combines theoretical insights with real-world analysis, grounding practical recommendations in empirical evidence, thus offering a scholarly yet highly valuable work that sheds light on both the current state and future directions of China's cultural trade initiatives abroad. This article dissects the work in question, dividing it into three distinct parts and providing a thorough analysis of each. In the first part, after systematically reviewing relevant theories and literature on cultural trade, the study applies institutional change theory to delineate the developmental stages of China's foreign cultural trade policies over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up. These stages include the Reform Window Period, the Phase of Active Promotion, and the Strategic Development Era. Additionally, the paper employs multi-stream theory to examine the driving forces and stage-specific characteristics underlying the evolution of China's foreign cultural trade policies. Beyond this, the analysis incorporates systematic descriptive statistics and competitiveness assessments to shed further light on the current state of cultural trade between China and the countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, including their product structures and competitive strengths. It also delves into the persistent challenge of China's cultural trade being "large but not strong".

In the second part, the study conducts empirical analyses based on multi-dimensional data and diverse modeling approaches. Specifically, the Constant Market Share (CMS) model is used to quantify the factors influencing fluctuations in the growth of cultural product exports, while an enhanced gravity model helps uncover the overarching mechanisms shaping global cultural trade flows. Meanwhile, a dual-difference model is employed to explore how internet platforms impact the export performance of new media products. Complementing these analyses, complex network theory combined with QAP analysis reveals the structural evolution patterns and key drivers of the cultural trade network.

Finally, building on the insights gained from the preceding sections, the third part proposes a comprehensive set of optimization strategies across multiple dimensions. These include refining trade structures, fostering high-quality development, establishing national cultural export hubs, expanding targeted markets to mitigate the "cultural discount", promoting coordinated dual-circulation strategies, implementing robust branding initiatives, enhancing trade facilitation, creating collaborative platforms, cultivating specialized talent, and strengthening the overall policy framework. Overall, the book's three parts are structured in a progressive, logically coherent manner, focusing intensively on core

¹ Yiping Huang (2016). Understanding China's Belt & Road Initiative: Motivation, Framework and Assessment, *China Economic Review*, Volume 40: 314-321.

issues such as the evolution of cultural trade policies, current market dynamics, underlying influence mechanisms, and actionable pathways for improvement.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, we have consistently prioritized cultural development as a central component of national governance and governance strategies, implementing a series of significant initiatives. These efforts have given rise to the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the cultural sphere, driving historic achievements in cultural development through both upholding core values and fostering innovative approaches¹. Today, as culture serves as the cornerstone of international exchanges among nations, cultural trade has been entrusted with the mission of “cultivating people through culture”, becoming a vital platform for promoting mutual learning between civilizations and fostering deeper people-to-people connections². Against the backdrop of the ongoing advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, cultural trade not only fulfills the economic role of supporting industrial growth but also shoulders the critical responsibility of spreading Chinese culture and enhancing global recognition of China’s unique cultural identity.

Professor Chen Baifu’s research is firmly grounded in national strategic needs, addressing pressing real-world challenges while systematically outlining the evolution of China’s foreign cultural trade—from policy-driven initiatives to a more dynamic, market-oriented approach. The transformation path—from market leadership and shifting from scale expansion to quality enhancement—provides both theoretical support and practical guidance for building a new, high-quality, culturally open framework.

II. Precise Understanding of China’s Contemporary Context and Foreign Cultural Trade Policies

At the outset of this book, we highlight how, in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, the process of economic globalization continues to deepen. As a product of culture and economic development reaching a certain stage, the cultural industry is increasingly becoming a vital force driving the further advancement of global economic integration. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of this book lies in its creation of a comprehensive research loop—spanning “theoretical tracing, empirical deconstruction, and practical policy implementation”—which breaks free from the conventional limitations of past studies on cultural trade, where qualitative descriptions often overshadowed quantitative analyses.

On a theoretical level, the author employs institutional change theory as a guiding framework to systematically examine the “evolutionary trajectory” of China’s foreign cultural trade policies over the past 40-plus years since reform and opening-up—ranging from the early phase of “exploratory openness”, through the “policy-driven” approach of the new century, to the “strategic upgrade” spurred by the Belt and Road Initiative. This analysis clearly outlines the stage-specific characteristics and underlying motivations behind these policy shifts, laying a robust theoretical foundation for the subsequent empirical investigation. By situating policy analysis within the broader context of macro-level institutional change, the book not only helps readers understand *what* the policies are but also

1 Xi Jinping (2025). “Accelerating the Construction of a Cultural Power.” *Qiuzhi* (05): 4-6.

2 Wang, Feiyan (2020). “A Study on Pathways to Strengthening Cultural Confidence from the Perspective of the Belt and Road Initiative.” *Ningxia University*.

provides deep insights into *why* they have evolved in such specific ways, showcasing the author's profound theoretical expertise.

Professor Chen Baifu takes us back to the late 20th and early 21st centuries, focusing on a comprehensive review of international scholars' research into the current state and challenges of cultural trade development—from various perspectives. First, he summarizes foreign scholars' studies on the cultural and creative industries in specific countries, highlighting the positive impacts of cultural elements from regions such as Latin America, Canada, South Korea, and the United States. Following this, he shifts to a domestic perspective, noting that early Chinese academic research on cultural trade primarily centered on copyright trading, with a particular emphasis on book copyright transactions. In recent years, as China has become increasingly integrated into global economic dynamics, domestic scholars have gradually expanded their focus to China's outward cultural trade¹—conducting in-depth analyses of the issues hindering its growth. Through this exploration, they aim to identify the key factors constraining China's overseas cultural trade development, ultimately proposing practical strategies and recommendations to foster further progress in this vital area. Professor Chen Baifu explores the factors influencing cultural trade development in this book from two perspectives: first, a qualitative analysis based on logical reasoning; and second, an empirical analysis grounded in econometric models. Notably, empirical research has become the dominant approach in studying the determinants of cultural trade. Many international scholars have primarily adopted an empirical lens, employing methodologies such as Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) theory and the Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) method.

Meanwhile, as the Belt and Road Initiative continues to gain global attention and influence, domestic academic discourse on this topic remains largely dominated by qualitative analyses—though these still predominantly focus on two key aspects: one centered on the cultural trade dynamics spurred by the Belt and Road Initiative itself. First, it examines patterns and path selection; second, it conducts an empirical study on the factors influencing cultural trade among co-built nations. The research reveals that, in the evolution and optimization of trade development patterns, national policies play a critical “commanding role”—acting as the guiding “baton”. Building on this insight, the study further explores the evolution of China's foreign cultural trade policies over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up. This book is distinguished by its comprehensive data, precise quantitative analysis, and clear stage-by-stage breakdown, offering a systematic overview of the development of China's international cultural trade. Looking back at the journey of China's overseas cultural trade, it is evident that this progress has been inseparable from the nation's strong emphasis and unwavering support. In this book, Professor Chen Baifu employs institutional change theory as a framework to systematically examine the cultural trade policies issued by the Chinese government between 2014 and 2022. Complementing this analysis with empirical studies focused on countries along the Belt and Road Initiative route, he proposes actionable pathways for policy optimization. This approach not only deepens the exploration of trends and strategies in China's international cultural trade under the Belt and Road Initiative but also holds significant practical and theoretical

¹ Zhao Zhiwei (2015). “A Study on the Development of China's Foreign Cultural Trade.” *Hebei University*.

value¹. Based on the general patterns of development sought within historical contexts, Professor Chen Baifu divides the evolution of China's foreign cultural policy into three distinct phases—"Reform Window Period", "Active Promotion Period", and "Strategic Development Period"—each characterized by unique features. This categorization excels in that it closely aligns with the "critical junctures" and "distinctive differences" in the policy's evolution, making the complex process more logical and easier to analyze. Moreover, the division is grounded in a dual framework that considers both "changes in the external environment" and "the inherent developmental logic of the policy itself", lending it strong persuasive power.

Additionally, when examining the driving forces behind the shifts in China's foreign cultural trade policies, each of these three phases reveals distinct dynamics: the Reform Window Period was primarily propelled by political factors; the Active Promotion Period was driven mainly by both policy-related and problem-related influences; and the Strategic Development Period again saw its momentum shaped largely by policy considerations and emerging challenges². This approach, which integrates the "Multi-Stream Framework"—encompassing political, policy, and problem streams—with a phase-specific analysis of underlying drivers, has the key advantage of transforming the often vague description of policy change mechanisms into something "precisely locatable, readily comparable, and fully traceable". By doing so, it not only remains firmly rooted in theoretical logic but also stays closely aligned with the realities of each stage, effectively sidestepping the pitfalls of overly generalized or homogenized explanations. Ultimately, this phased approach addresses the critical challenge of analyzing policies as fragmented narratives, offering three significant benefits:

First, it features distinct characteristics: each period is clearly labeled with a unique identifier that precisely captures the core essence of the policy at that stage. For instance, the "window period" emphasizes exploration, while the "strategic phase" highlights top-level design. This allows readers to swiftly grasp the distinct attributes of each phase, making the policy priorities instantly clear at a glance.

Second, it demonstrates logical coherence, reflecting how the evolution of policy divisions strictly follows the logical sequence of "initiation—advancement—upgrade", clearly illustrating the evolving trends in China's foreign cultural policies: shaped by shifts in the external environment, from initial reactive adaptation to external environmental changes toward proactive leadership in later stages—rendering the evolutionary process more systematic, coherent, and patterned.

Thirdly, it facilitates research by reinforcing the practical applicability of academic studies or policy analyses. This approach enables researchers to quickly pinpoint "policy priorities during specific periods"—for instance, studying the systematic development of the cultural "going global" framework could focus on the years 2002 to 2011, while examining how cultural strategies align with national initiatives would be best suited to the period from 2012 to 2018. Such clarity provides a well-defined research framework for future analysis.

1 Qin Zhipeng (2016). "A Study on the Development and Architectural Practice of Deconstructivist Architecture in China." *Hunan University*.

2 Chen Baifu, Deng Zixuan, Yang Jianqing (2018). "A Study on the Evolution of China's Foreign Cultural Trade Policies since the 40 Years of Reform and Opening-up." *China Soft Science*, (10): 39-51.

This analysis, through “source-flow decomposition”, further identifies the “fundamental triggers” behind policy changes at each stage, enabling a deep understanding that moves from “what happened” to “why it happened”. The first two chapters, by clearly outlining the “combination of driving forces” at different stages, allow for a reverse-engineering approach—revealing “which source flows played a critical role in which phase”—and ultimately provide valuable insights for guiding future adjustments to foreign cultural trade policies.

III. Trade-Theoretical Analysis and Macro-Micro Empirical Expansion

Relying solely on theory is not enough to strengthen the persuasiveness of an article—it must also be supported by detailed and precise data, as well as empirical research that tests the theoretical assumptions. The second part, which forms the core of this book, spans Chapters 3 through 8 and focuses primarily on conducting multi-faceted quantitative and empirical analyses of countries jointly participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. Given the nature of this section, analysis and evaluation can be conducted from three distinct dimensions. First, in the empirical research section, the book demonstrates rigorous academic standards and innovative research methods—features that make it particularly compelling and persuasive. The author does not merely present cultural trade data in a straightforward manner but instead employs multiple sophisticated quantitative tools to deeply dissect the underlying issues: By calculating competitiveness metrics, the author clearly maps out the “strengths and weaknesses” of China’s cultural trade with co-building countries; meanwhile, an improved gravity model combined with a difference-in-differences approach precisely identifies the key factors driving fluctuations in export growth. Additionally, leveraging complex network theory and QAP analysis, the research unveils the “structural characteristics” and “evolutionary dynamics” of the cultural trade network.

In the context of economic globalization, the share of cultural goods imports and exports within the overall service trade continues to rise steadily. Meanwhile, cultural trade and service flows between China and the Belt and Road Initiative partner countries have become a vital component of global cultural trade. Analyzing the global movement of cultural products and services, this study systematically gathers data on the proportion of creative services from developing versus developed economies in the global market from 2010 to 2020. A comparative analysis reveals a notable gap in market shares between developing and developed economies—though this gap is narrowing, the two regions remain in an imbalanced state. With the rise of the digital economy and the ongoing integration of culture and technology, the factors influencing the global flow of cultural products and services are evolving into a more diversified and complex landscape. To empirically analyze these cultural trade dynamics, Professor Chen has developed two models. First, he introduces two key variables—economic size and geographic distance—to construct a gravity model. After testing the model’s results, he concludes that overall economic scale, total population size, economic institutional distance, shared language, and, Trade agreements and other factors are positively correlated with

cultural trade, while geographic distance shows a negative correlation with cultural trade¹. Furthermore, given the increasingly prominent trend of digital cultural trade, digital technologies such as new media are playing an ever-more critical role in shaping cultural commerce. To illustrate this point, Professor Chen Baifu used the launch of WeChat as an example, examining its impact on exports of new-media products. Drawing on panel data from 184 countries spanning the period 2007 to 2020, he constructed a difference-in-differences model, analyzed the results, and rigorously tested their validity. The findings revealed that, compared to low-growth countries, the introduction of WeChat has had a significantly stronger positive effect on China's exports of new-media products to high-growth nations. This research design—featuring “cross-validation across multiple methodologies”—ensures that conclusions are no longer vague or subjective but instead grounded in robust, quantifiable data. For instance, the empirical analysis of the radiating effects of “National Cultural Export Bases” provides direct, evidence-based insights that can inform future policy adjustments, truly enabling decision-making driven by “data-driven insights”.

Second, the book consistently adopts a “problem-oriented” and “solution-focused” approach, grounding its academic research in the practical question of “how to drive real-world implementation”. The article examines the current status and competitiveness of cultural trade across 11 countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, analyzing key factors influencing fluctuations in cultural product exports. It calculates and assesses the international market share, Trade Competitiveness Index (TC), Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA), and Strategic Revealed Comparative Advantage (SRCA) indices for China's core cultural products, while also exploring the underlying reasons behind these trends. The findings reveal that although China holds a significant share of global exports for its core cultural products, there is an uneven internal development within these products, resulting in relatively weaker competitive advantages²—and that China's exports are still heavily concentrated on high-energy-consuming, low-value-added goods. Building on these insights, the study further proposes targeted policy recommendations aimed at optimizing the structure of cultural trade, strengthening cultural brand-building efforts, enhancing cultural copyright protection, and providing strategic support for culturally oriented trade policies. Each section of the analysis follows a consistent framework: first outlining the context, then identifying key characteristics, pinpointing existing challenges, and finally offering practical suggestions to address them.

Based on the theoretical review and empirical analysis outlined above, Professor Chen's proposed optimization recommendations are not generic “empty suggestions”—instead, they represent targeted “action plans”: ranging from restructuring foreign trade to address the issue of a single cultural trade structure and imbalanced development, to promoting high-quality cultural growth by enhancing the added value and cultural appeal of cultural products, and finally to guiding the establishment of national cultural export bases, thereby fostering regionally coordinated development

1 Deng Zixuan (2019). “A Study on the Determinants of Cultural Trade between China and Belt and Road Countries in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative.” *Hunan Normal University*.

2 Chen Baifu, Liu Ying (2021). “An Analysis of the Competitiveness of China's Foreign Cultural Trade: A Comparative Study Based on Core Cultural Product Trade with Belt and Road Countries.” *Huxiang Forum*, (1): 115-128.

as “growth poles”. Each of these strategies directly addresses the specific pain points and challenges identified in the empirical research, creating a comprehensive logical framework that seamlessly links “identifying problems, analyzing issues, and devising solutions”. This framework provides valuable directional guidance for government policymakers formulating policies and for cultural enterprises seeking to expand into new markets. Particularly in the context of the rapid growth of the digital economy, where cultural products are increasingly converging with digital technologies to drive innovation, the digital transformation of cultural trade has become an inevitable trend. Accelerating the development of a culture dissemination system centered around digital platforms—and leveraging emerging channels such as cross-border e-commerce and social networks—will effectively facilitate the precise export of Chinese cultural products. A key initiative to promote “culture going global”. These recommendations not only address the structural contradictions identified in empirical research but also provide a practical, actionable roadmap for the sustainable development of China's cultural trade.

Building on this, Professor Chen further emphasized that policy implementation should focus on coordination and dynamic adjustments, while avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach. Notably, Professor Chen employed social network analysis to examine the structural characteristics of the network between China and countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, systematically outlining the depth and evolving patterns of cultural trade relationships between these nations. The study reveals that the cultural trade network among the co-building countries of the Belt and Road remains relatively stable, with each nation actively engaging in cultural exchanges. Building on this insight, Professor Chen further explored the key factors influencing China's cultural trade network with these countries—focusing on economic, institutional, cultural, and geographic dimensions—using the QAP analysis method. Specifically, regarding economic factors, the greater the disparity in economic size between two countries, the more likely they are to engage in trade of cultural products. As for social factors, residents' education expenditures showed only a weak and unstable link to cultural trade. Similarly, Professor Chen drew relevant conclusions about cultural and geographic factors based on his analytical model. Combined with the emerging global landscape of cultural trade by 2025, these findings offer crucial guidance for China's strategic decision-making in selecting regions for its “cultural outreach” initiatives.

Third, viewed from a broader perspective, the value of this book lies not only in its specialized research on cultural trade but also in providing an “economic dimension” to the concept of “mutual learning among civilizations”, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Cultural trade serves as both a vehicle for economic cooperation and a bridge for cultural exchange. The book's analysis of cultural trade competitiveness and network structures essentially explores the question of “how to better promote Chinese culture outwardly while fostering deeper collaboration in building shared national cultures”. This integrated approach—combining “economic logic” with “cultural logic”—transforms cultural trade from a mere “exchange of goods” into a powerful force that facilitates human-to-human connections and paves the way toward a future global community, underscoring the contemporary relevance and societal responsibility of academic inquiry. Building on this foundation, the book further uncovers the dynamic interplay between cultural identity and economic cooperation,

highlighting that cultural dissemination must be embedded within the restructuring of regional value chains to enable meaningful, deep-level dialogue among diverse civilizations. By quantifying the marginal impact of “cultural affinity” on trade flows, the study empirically demonstrates how emotional and value-based resonance can act as a crucial buffer, mitigating institutional friction and fostering smoother cross-border exchanges. Currently, the dual trends of accelerating global digitalization and reshaping geopolitical and cultural landscapes are intensifying. By establishing multilateral cooperation mechanisms centered on rule alignment, standard harmonization, and platform interconnectivity, we can foster the development of an open, fair, and inclusive digital cultural ecosystem—providing a strategic foundation for deepening China's cultural integration into the global community.

IV. Proposing Strategic Recommendations to Optimize China's Development of Foreign Cultural Trade

Building on the analysis from the first two sections, Professor Chen Baifu, in the third part of the article, offers a systematic set of optimization recommendations addressing the core challenge of structural contradictions in China's development of international cultural trade—specifically, how to continuously refine the structure of cultural trade with foreign countries. This approach aims to further enhance global competitiveness while actively promoting high-quality growth in China's overseas cultural trade activities. Promote development¹ by thoughtfully guiding the establishment of national cultural export hubs, while also striving to expand markets in countries jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative and continuously reducing the “cultural discount”. We must coordinate domestic and international dual circulation strategies to strengthen trade competitiveness and further enhance the facilitation of cultural trade with these partner nations. Meanwhile, cultivating specialized talent in cultural trade will help solidify our human resource base. Finally, by refining the policy framework for overseas cultural trade, we can create a more supportive institutional environment—addressing challenges in cultural trade development through multi-faceted, comprehensive efforts. On the path to implementation, we should focus on the dual-driven approach of digital technology and content innovation, strengthening the added value of cultural products while enhancing their suitability for international audiences. Leveraging big data analytics, we can precisely identify the cultural needs of co-building countries, enabling the delivery of differentiated content.

Additionally, we must accelerate the practical application of new infrastructure technologies like 5G and artificial intelligence in cultural export scenarios, boosting communication efficiency and enriching interactive experiences. At the same time, it is recommended to refine cross-border protection mechanisms for cultural intellectual property rights, fostering greater mutual trust in international cooperation. By adopting a pilot-first strategy combined with institutional integration and innovation, we can create a collaborative framework driven by government guidance, led by enterprises, and supported by societal participation—ultimately bolstering China's cultural soft power

¹ Luo, Jingjing (2022). “Digitalization Driving High-Quality Development in Agriculture.” *China State Farms*, (1) : 65-66.

and global influence. Professor Chen suggests that, Strategic interactions over cultural trade rules within the WTO framework., China should actively participate in shaping international cultural trade regulations. While safeguarding national cultural sovereignty, China should flexibly apply the “cultural exception” principle to embrace globalization. For instance, on December 13, 2005, Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission for Information Society and Media, highlighted in an open letter advocating the revision of the “Television Without Frontiers Directive” that the EU Commission proposed fully replacing it with the “Audiovisual Media Services Directive”¹—a move aimed at curbing imports of U.S. film and television products. Drawing from this experience, China could incorporate a “cultural diversity clause” into its Belt and Road cultural trade agreements, providing moderate protection for sectors such as digital content and performing arts services. At the same time, China must remain deeply engaged in international rule-making processes, pushing for the establishment of a new framework anchored in the “cultural exception” while also addressing the interests of developing nations. By promoting regional cultural trade agreements that include “cultural exception” provisions, China can not only underscore its commitment to respecting cultural diversity but also strengthen the voice of developing countries in global cultural governance. Moreover, countries should leverage the Belt and Road Initiative as a platform to establish intergovernmental mechanisms for coordinating cultural policies, fostering mutual recognition of standards and collaborative regulatory approaches, ultimately paving the way toward a fairer and more balanced new order in cultural trade.

Currently, cultural trade under the Belt and Road Initiative continues to thrive, with new forms of trade and innovative collaboration models constantly emerging. Looking ahead, more scholars will need to remain engaged and delve deeper into this evolving field. Professor Chen Baifu’s groundbreaking work undoubtedly establishes a robust framework for research in this area, offering invaluable insights and references. It not only builds upon and elevates previous studies but also points the way forward for future research. For scholars involved in cultural trade studies as well as those contributing to the broader discourse on Belt and Road Initiative development, this book strikes the perfect balance—combining theoretical depth with rigorous empirical analysis. This work—both a seminal text on sexuality and a practical guide—is undoubtedly a masterpiece worth revisiting time and again. It not only unveils the deep-seated logic of cultural trade within global value chains but also highlights the intrinsic unity between cross-cultural learning and economic collaboration. In the age of digital civilization, cultural globalization is no longer a one-way export; instead, it has evolved into a dynamic, two-way process rooted in empathy, dialogue, and co-creation. Only by upholding the dialectical balance between cultural identity and openness can we truly unlock the potential for a transformative leap in soft power within our increasingly diverse and interconnected global landscape.

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¹ Viviane Reding: Why Europe needs to modernise its TV without Frontiers Directive.

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