



JOMEC Journal
Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies

Published by Cardiff University Press

Editorial: Advertising China

Sally Chan and Rachel Phillips

University of Leeds and Cardiff University

Sally Chan Email: S.S.Y.Chan@leeds.ac.uk

Rachel Phillips Email: PhillipsRM9@cardiff.ac.uk

Keywords

JOMEC Journal

Editorial

Advertising

China

Abstract

This is the editorial of issue 15 of *JOMEC Journal*, which is a special themed issue, entitled 'Advertising China'. The editorial gives an overview of the issue contents, which traverse a wide range of issues related to advertising (and) China.

Contributor Note

Sally Chan is co-editor of this special issue on 'Advertising China'. She is Senior Teaching Fellow in Marketing at Leeds University where she teaches advertising to MA and MSc students at Leeds University Business School. She is currently writing her doctoral thesis on martial arts representation in British advertising from 1960s-1990s.

Rachel Phillips is an editor of *JOMEC Journal* and a PhD researcher in the School of Journalism, Media and Culture at Cardiff University.

Citation

Chan, Sally and Rachel Phillips (2020), 'Editorial: Advertising China', *JOMEC Journal* 15, 'Advertising China', ed. Sally Chan and Rachel Phillips, 1-3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18573/jomec.204>

Accepted for publication: 07th July 2020

This special issue of *JOMEC Journal* is constructed from the theme of 'Advertising China' with contributions from scholars in the multidisciplinary fields of film, media, advertising, marketing, cultural and Chinese studies. The collection of papers provides unique perspectives about advertising in and beyond China and in relation to the Chinese. As well as historical insights from one of the world's oldest civilizations, this issue is designed to encourage debates about the role that advertising may play in shifting global perceptions of China and the Chinese overseas.

As one of the world's most populous nations with close to 1.4 billion people, China's economic rise since the inception of the Open Door Policy in 1978 has enhanced its status as a global player on the world stage. Its success is often fraught with contradictions, particularly when scrutinised through a Western/colonial lens – not helped by the contentious trading relationships that existed between China and the West since the mid 19th century. Added to this is the sizeable population of Chinese overseas (*hua qiao*) who departed from their motherland during 1700s–1900s for Asia, America and Europe as sojourners (Pan, 1990; Chan, 1997). In Britain, chain migration shaped the dispersed settlement of these 'silent' minorities, fuelled by the 1960s–1970s burgeoning interest in exotic cuisines (Chan, 2002).

Movement in terms of trade and migration therefore facilitated rhetorical analysis of the concept of 'China' and the 'Chinese' in all fields of study, from consumer behaviour to entrepreneurial studies to social dimensions of culture. Advertising has undoubtedly contributed to this rhetoric through its representations of China and the Chinese.

As a commercial art form, advertising's power to influence and/or exploit, audiences, (mis)represent the 'Other' and distort reality have often been criticised, and we provide evidence of this in this issue. Other papers deal with shifts socio-cultural changes and the rise of feminism, national identity and branding, critical advertising development, and modern China's preoccupations with celebrities.

We start with the first of two historical papers dealing with the overseas Chinese community in Britain, in particular, focusing on the visualisation of the Chinese in British advertising. Paul Bowman explores orientalist representations of the Chinese through clichés and caricatures in a comprehensive analysis of television commercials from 1955–2018. He discusses the hidden racism, racist codes, conventions and tropes that act as signifiers of China, including the association with food advertising (chop suey) and martial arts ('chop socky') amongst others. Bowman contends that the 'otherness' exemplified by these stereotypes persists today. This lack of understanding of the impacts of colonial and racist depictions constitutes what Bowman terms 'invisible racism' and is reflected in the moral myopia or muteness exhibited by advertising practitioners (Drumwright and Murphy, 2004).

Sally Chan's paper (co-authored with Emily Caston, Maddie Ohl and Sean Nixon) curates a selection of TV and print advertising featuring martial arts rhetoric that has become a popular trope in advertising. By comparing a range of advertisements from the 1960s to 1970s, we map the sociocultural trends and screen culture that led to the earliest examples of Japanese and Chinese forms of martial arts imageries to be adopted,

including Pfizer's Hai Karate (1973) and Golden Wonder's Kung Fuey (1974-76). The paper questions whether martial arts advertising authentically mirrors or reflects British audience feelings towards 'the Other'. The paper also explains exoticisation and exclusion of the Chinese in the context of authenticity and appropriation in advertising.

Shulin Gong provides a modern take on Chinese and British television advertising, focusing on the concept of 'new woman'. Feministic representations are shown in the context of how women are depicted in car advertisements targeted at British and Chinese audiences. The findings indicate a convergence of lifestyles in these two comparative groups, with implications for the influence of modern feminism on the gender identities of new women within British and Chinese societies.

Hongmei Li's paper addresses the Chinese government's need to brand China and Chinese brands to the West. It focuses on New York's Times Square as a hub for reaching out to American audiences after the success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The author elucidates China's brand communications efforts in America through its 2011 publicity campaign and the range of Chinese brands that were released in New York. The paper also discusses implications of these campaigns, and the challenges that China and Chinese companies face, as part of their drive for global success.

Giovanna Puppini's comprehensive coverage of advertising in China from 1979 to 2019 provides us with a critical overview of the growth and popularity of advertising in China. It maps China's long history of advertising development, its changes and characteristics. China's efforts for global recognition on the back

of the country's performance at the 2008 Beijing Olympics is highlighted before its award at Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity made the rest of the world take notice. Despite these successes, the Chinese government's ambivalence towards advertising is illustrated by the regulatory constraints, the emphasis on public service advertising, despite the proliferation of media in China in recent years.

Our final paper, by Frances Weightman, illustrates perfectly China's preoccupation with all things driven by celebrities. In this case, award winning children's author Cao Wenxuan and his drive for global recognition is discussed within the context of advertising promotion and representations. The paper focusses on the visual analysis of paratextual texts of the author's publications in order to understand how the author and/or publisher have constructed his image. Finally, Weightman provides an assessment of whether these representations are 'genuine' or fictitious.

We hope that this issue will elucidate the need for more diverse, even authentic or genuine representations to ensure that advertising messages about China and its people in and outside of China manage to resonate with their intended audiences in progressive ways, and that regressive forms of colonialist hegemony in representations is addressed. Finally, the multi-disciplinary approach in this issue is designed to encourage dialogue not just amongst academics but to foster debates amongst advertising practitioners who may learn from the historical developments of Chinese advertising, understand the complex legal constraints, as well as contextualize media proliferation within the China market. There is also much to learn about post-, quasi- and crypto-colonialist

representations of minority communities and demands for a more inclusive visual ideology and better ways of seeing the world.

Thanks are due to our Executive Editor, Prof Bowman, for affording us this platform to share our ideas and research

in this special issue of *JOMEC Journal*. Thanks also to the tireless work of archivists at the History of Advertising Trust (HAT) and British Film Institute (BFI). Finally, we dedicate this to our families for their loyal support during the construction of this issue.

References

- Chan, Sally. 1997. 'Migration, Cultural Identity and Assimilation Effects on Entrepreneurship for the Overseas Chinese in Britain'. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 3(4), 211- 222. DOI: [10.1080/13602389700000050](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602389700000050)
- Chan, Sally. 2002. 'Sweet and Sour – The Chinese Experience of Food' in: Anne J Kershen. (Ed.) *Food in the Migrant Experience*. London: Ashgate Pub Limited.
- Drumwright, Minette E., and Patrick E. Murphy. 'How Advertising Practitioners View Ethics: Moral Muteness, Moral Myopia, and Moral Imagination'. *Journal of Advertising* 33(2): 7-24. www.jstor.org/stable/4189254
- Pan, Lynn. 1990. *Sons of the Yellow Emperor – the story of the Overseas Chinese*. London: Mandarin.



Cardiff University Press
Gwasg Prifysgol Caerdydd

www.cardiffuniversitypress.org

This article was first published in *JOMEC Journal*

JOMEC Journal is an online, open-access and peer reviewed journal dedicated to publishing the highest quality innovative academic work in Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. It is published by Cardiff University Press and run by an editorial collective based in the School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University, committed both to open-access publication and to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and academic integrity. *JOMEC Journal* is peer reviewed with an international, multi-disciplinary Editorial Board and Advisory Panel. It welcomes work that is located in any one of these disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary work that approaches Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies as overlapping and interlocking fields. It is particularly interested in work that addresses the political and ethical dimensions, stakes, problematics and possibilities of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies.

To submit a paper or to discuss publication, please contact jomecjournal@cardiff.ac.uk

Editors: Sally Chan and Rachel Phillips

Executive Editor: Professor Paul Bowman

www.cf.ac.uk/jomecjournal

Twitter: @JOMECjournal

ISSN: ISSN 2049-2340

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. Based on a work at www.cf.ac.uk/jomecjournal.

