

# STRATEGIC IDENTITY AND REFORM IN THE PERIPHERAL AREA

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*Using the social constructivism paradigm, this article displays the social consequences of development programs, which are subsumed to the concept of strategic identity, undertaken in Russia and China. When deeply embedded social practices are ignored by economic and political reforms tailored by elites that don't know or do not take into considerations local specificities, social chaos is very likely to emerge.*

**Key words:** *social constructivism, strategic identity, shock therapy, Friedmanianism.*

## INTRODUCTION

The imbalances of the American identity formula have been noticed at the beginning of the new millennium by Samuel Huntington. Accents that once used to fall upon race, ethnicity, language and religion have been moved by the American elite to ideology. The American creed, namely the ideological component of the American identity, springs traditionally from the Anglo-Saxon culture, a mixture of religion, Christian Protestant work ethics, the English language and the British traditions. The present situation, characterized by a wide gap between race, ethnicity, language, religion on the one hand, and an eroded American belief besetted by multiculturalism on the other hand, makes Huntington question himself: *Who are we?* For if we do not know who we are, we cannot know what we want, argues Huntington, who stresses that a fleeting identity defines incorrectly the national interest. One nation's identity profile is outlined by its specific moral and intellectual traits, and what distinguishes it in relation to other nations represents an important source of power. Thus Hans Morgenthau emphasizes the necessity of understanding these features, because the lack of interest towards one nation's specificities or their misinterpretation could bring defeat in a military confrontation.

These kind of intellectual concerns are not new. At the dusk of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, Johann Gottfried von Herder thought that every nation had its own genius, a genius that rised from the collective ego. Different disciplines were summoned to

bring to light the national genius from the abyss of the collective ego. Philology<sup>1</sup>, history and archaeology found themselves among them. One thought that thanks to these disciplines the identity curtains pulled by time over the ancient abode, that is one nation's melting pot, were to be removed one by one. Thus, one nation's identity core, that is its ethnics, cultural and historic roots, was to be revealed.

Starting with the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, one can discover in the Romanian space intellectual propensities towards the study of peoples' identitarian substratum. The initiators were the chroniclers Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin, whose intellectual effort, focused on highlighting the identity melting pot of the Romanians, was carried on by pundits belonging to the Transylvanian School. In the interwar period, one of the Romanian intellectuals interested in discovering the very first layer of the national identity was Mircea Vulcănescu, according to whom Romanian way of life is synonymous with the Romanian soul, which Vulcănescu describes as an architecture of temptations or as a conglomerate of perishable identities. Representing the cultures and civilizations that a people has encountered throughout its history, these specific temptations are the ephemeral clothes that the Romanian soul puts on when it feels out-fashioned. Therefore, the temptations are not dominant identities, stresses Vulcănescu. But although they are only external influences, these temptations can generate identity slippages endowed with enough power to weaken the symbolic patterns which govern a particular way of life.

Responsible for the capitalization of one nations's specific culture are national elites. Usually, identity temptations, as way of life typical for other civilization, prove themselves powerless when dealing with a national elite steeled by the national culture. Ethno-centered elites, namely elites which know the social practices shaped by the local culture, use state to preserve the collective memory and national genius. That is why, their social, political, economic and identity projects take into consideration what's naturally valued at the local level. Identity temptations are usually too strong for those elites endowed with a weak national instinct. Given that, the reforms initiated by such elites, who hasn't been substantiated by socio-cultural patterns typical for a space, fail to bring social harmony and general welfare. On the contrary, social projects tailored by these elites engender political chaos and social exhaustion. Our thesis, that is to be argued throughout the article, is that culture plays an important role in the process of conceiving reform programs. Depending on the asserted identity model, a political elite remotes or connects a people to the source of its vitality, that is its language, religion, traditions, history, social memory and so on.

*Social constructivism*, as a paradigm particular to the area of international relations, identifies a direct connection between national identity and national interest. According to realist and liberal paradigms, the national interest has stable character and a relatively constant content. Social constructivism purports that

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<sup>1</sup> "In and through the Language's soul, Reason incorporates itself in the *Volksgeist*, in the 'spirit' or 'peoples' genius'" (Bădescu, 2004, p. 21).

national interest cannot be aprioristically known, emphasizing that it is rather a dependent variable, whose content is influenced by the identity model proposed by the governmental elite. Thus social constructivism stresses the role of culture in defining internal and external policy of a state.

Constructivist analysis uses the mental map of the elite in order to reveal the connection between national interest and local specificities. The concept of mental map is characteristic to the emic approach in anthropology, which, as a qualitative technique, attempts to decode the social reality of a community through the mental categories used by its very inhabitants. Unlike the ethical perspective, which decodes local life using scientific categories, the emic perspective resorts to inhabitants' semi-scientific categories. Thus it is able to offer insights, that the quantitative perspective cannot deliver. Social constructivism boasts of a similar ability: to offer, through the mental map of the elite, an image from inside the state, an image which is encoded in a concept called *strategic identity*. "By '*strategic identity*' I understand *the assumed vision of the elites* (the population perceives it as a national idea) *regarding the shape that the politic and economic system should take, and also the main threats upon security, the potential enemies and allies and the great strategy that is to be followed in the international arena, in order to ensure the place and role of the country in the international system (...)*" (Secieru, 2008, p. 41).

### STRATEGIC IDENTITY AND SOCIAL REFORM IN RUSSIA

At Belovejia in 1991, leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus legalized the ending of the Soviet Union, an empire whose peoples had become accustomed with reforms since the end of the XIVth century. By 1991, major reformers of Russia, from Ivan the Terrible to Mikhail Gorbachev, had tailored strategic identities shaped by distinct values. But all had had the same pivotal idea: Russia seen as an imperial power.

A budget deficit of 30% of GDP, cities threatened by the spectrum of famine, an army unable to defend the state borders because the emptiness of the public coffer, have all been reasons which liquidated Russia's power position in the world politics in 1991. It was a time when post-Soviet Russia's elites believed that the fundamental role in reforming Russia should be played by the West and the international financial institutions. As a consequence of that belief, a new strategic identity was affirmed, one that rejected the Czarist and Soviet past and suppressed Russia's imperial identity. The Russian history and culture suddenly didn't matter anymore and the West was recognized as the single power in the sphere of international relations. Western civilization and its standards were swiftly accepted by President Yeltsin and his pro-Western political elite, who run Russia until 2000. In that time, social reforms had a single goal: to impose Russia a development pace

specific to Western countries. Consequently, the layers of the previous strategic identity were fully reconstructed, and Russia was upgraded over night from a totalitarian regime with minimum civil rights and a centralized economy to a true democracy, endowed with human rights and market economy. "The new political, historical, cultural and ethnic boundaries lacked coherence when overlapped with the mental maps of the Russians" (Secrieru, 2008, p. 49). The identity rebound was overwhelming.

Naomi Klein, the author of *The Shock Doctrine*, believes that post-Cold War Russia has suffered three major shocks. Dissolution of the Soviet Union is the first one of them and the most important. The second one is the *shock therapy* that the centralized economy of Russia has undergone in the time of President Boris Yeltsin. The last huge shock that the post-Cold War Russia has been confronted with according to Naomi Klein, was the army attacking the Parliament on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1993. The suppression of Parliament was described then by President Yeltsin as the only way to defend "(...) Russia's new capitalist economy against the threat of democracy" (Klein, 2008, p. 246). According to the strategic identity developed by the pro-Western elite, an economy that had been regulated by the state for the last 70 years was to be quickly transformed into a market economy. *The shock therapy* designed by Milton Friedman, founder of the Chicago School of Economics and winner of the 1976 Nobel Prize in Economics, was the proposed solution. Starting from the premise that "(...) free market is a perfect scientific system (...)" (Klein, 2008, p. 57), Friedman thought that any interference in the functioning of this flawless mechanism generates high inflation rates and high unemployment.

But the Great Depression of 1929 had already showed that the market is a whimsy mechanism. From this observation derived the conclusions of John Maynard Keynes, the creator of macroeconomics, according to whom market cannot adjust itself. Therefore, state intervention in the economy had been considered desirable since. But not by Milton Friedman. The economic principles proposed by the founder of the Chicago School of Economics sought to remove all obstacles that hampered the functioning of the market. According to Friedman's neoliberal philosophy of development, state should play a minimum role when it comes to economy. Thus the rules that hindered profit accumulation were to be removed, state's assets were to be privatized and public subsidies which had supported social programs were to be drastically reduced or even removed. Since the 1929 Great Depression, politicians had understood the danger represented by a deregulated market economy and had consequently embraced the interventionist economic policies proposed by John Keynes. But the control that state had exerted through its taxes over the large corporations compelled their owners to redistribute an important part of the revenues, a policy that made the CEOs quite unhappy. These were the men that supported the economic philosophy proposed by Milton Friedman.

*The shock therapy* articulated by the Chicago Boys, also called creative destruction, “(...) tries to systematically dismantle the existing laws and regulations in order to recreate the previous anarchic environment” (Klein, 2008, p. 258). Social chaos, which is deliberately caused by the shock therapy, aims at “(...) creating opportunities that facilitates huge and swiftly made profits, not in spite of the state of anarchy, but thanks to it”(ibid.). In other words, the shock therapy economic doctrine is designed to impoverish nation states for the benefit of transnational companies. Shock therapy’s effectiveness depends especially on the strategic identity asserted by the governmental elite. For a wrong strategic identity, namely one which disregards local experiences and the institutional pattern shaped by the local culture, could turn the national economy into an enclave economy.

The shock doctrine refers to an institutional model imposed from outside, due to the existing imbalance of power between states. In Russia, however, chaos was created from the inside, as the new strategic identity, conceived and supported by the political elite, was clearly at variance with the institutional route followed by Russia in the last four centuries. Post-Cold War Russia’s social disorder has been confirmed by President Yeltsin who has described his country as a *criminal superpower*. Over 8,000 policemen lost their lives in confrontations with mafia groups in 1992 (Secieru, p. 2008). Due to more than 4,000 criminal groups linked with the political class, Russia was considered a threat to the security of bordering states in 1994.

A strategic identity that, culturally speaking, is akin to the shock doctrine engenders dramatic social and economic consequences. Between 1992 and 1993, sky-high inflation diminished real income with 46% in Russia. After 1998 the national currency collapsed, and real income shranked by another 15% (Secieru, p. 2008). Millions of people from the middle class lost their life fortune, and other millions no longer received salaries because budgetary subsidies had been cut. Therefore, population’s average consumption was 40% lower in 1993 compared with the previous year (Klein, 2008, p. 243). Very quickly, the shock therapy administered by pro-Western elite pushed one third of Russia's population under the poverty line. According to a World Bank report, 74 million Russians lived below the poverty line in 1996, that is more than half of the population (Klein, 2008, 254). Russia’s 1998 GDP was 43.3% lower in comparison to the 1991 one, industrial production fell by 56% in the mean time, and 6.6 million Russian citizens died between 1992 to 2006. “Russia’s demography befits a country at war. The population of 142m is shrinking by 700,000 people a year. By 2050 it could be down to 100m. The death rate is double the average for developed countries. The life expectancy of Russian males, at just 60 years, is one of the lowest in the world. Only half of Russian boys now aged 16 can expect to live to 60, much the same as at the end of the 19th century” (The Economist, Nov 27th 2008, print edition). Because of the demographic decline, rural areas were deserted. Consequently, approximately one third of European Russia is not inhabited at the

moment. From a demographical point of view, these depopulated areas are considered truly black holes by Tatyana Nefedova, geographer and specialist in agriculture (ibid.).

A fast decreasing population generates identity and geopolitical issues. Although ethnic Russians continue to form the dominant ethnic group, its weight in the total population has decreased from 81.5% in 1989 to 79.8% in 2002. The active population shrinks by one million people annually, a compression of about 8 million being estimated for the next 7 years. By 2025, Russia's current labor force of 90 million will lose up to 18-19 million. "What makes a shrinking population dangerous for a country that has always defined itself by its external borders is the loss of energy it entails, Mr Vishnevsky argues. The Soviet Union did not just try to exploit the resources of its vast and inhospitable land, it tried to populate it. Now large swathes of land in Siberia and the far east are emptying out as people move to central Russia. The population density in the country's far east is 1.1 people per square kilometre. On the other side of the border with China it is nearly 140 times that figure" (The Economist, Nov 27th 2008, print edition).

Russian citizens enthroned a new president in 2000. The strategic identity articulated by President Vladimir Putin was inspired from the writings of Russian panslavists Nikolai Danilevskii and Constantin Leotiev, but the new identity model was also imbued with the ideas belonging to euroasianists like Piotr Saviĭskii, Nikolai Trubeĭkoi and Gheorghii Vernadski. These geopoliticians' main tenet is that Russia doesn't belong to Europe, but it doesn't belong to Asia either. Russia is depicted as a different world, a particular universe, which is not a territorial entity, but rather a spiritual one, an idea which had agglutinated the space dominated by the Russian spirit. The eurAsianists identify western world as the main threat toward Russia, viewed as an ideocracy. The strategic identity defined by these scholars emphasized the need for the historical continuity with Czarist and Soviet Russia, and therefore the imperial Russia should be the underlying layer of national identity. Such strategic identities were clearly anti-American and anti-Western. Given the fact that the main coordinates of President Putin's mental map have been the partial acceptance of the market economy, faith in the greatness of Russia and in the ideas of social equality one cannot say that the new president has shared a salient anti-Western attitude. Russia has been characterized by President Putin as a "(...) regional superpower with a potential role in the world politics" (Secieru, 2008, p. 153). In order to regain that role, public monopolies on natural resources were reinstated, a drastic financial discipline was imposed, and the IMF loans were abandoned.

But although new and more closely connected to the Russian mentalities, the strategic identity asserted by President Putin couldn't remove Russia from the social decay caused by the previous identity model. For demographic, economic and identity issues couldn't be solved over night. With respect to ownership still existed "the same ideological hangover of Communist origin" (Greenspan, 2008,

p. 333). Wages have been increased, but not through technological innovation. "Because Russia's population has fallen, per capita income has grown more rapidly than GDP, rising from \$1,312 in 1999 to \$9,070 in 2007. Not all the economic benefits accrued to the wealthy: Average monthly wages rose eightfold, from \$62 in 1999 to an estimated \$529 in 2007." (Rand Corporation, 2009, p. 47)

Although President Putin announced as early as 2005 a plan of ambitious technological research, plan that was to be financed by the state, Alan Greenspan estimates that Russia won't hold a pole position in the technology competition of the XXI<sup>th</sup> century. He has been right so far. Russia's economic growth has been mainly generated by exports of low value-added goods. That is exactly the goods for which demand has fallen dramatically in the context of international financial crisis. "Demand for Gazprom's natural gas will plunge by about 60 billion cubic meters this year (...). Gazprom earned profits last year of \$30.8 billion on revenues of \$160.5 billion, according to annual results released this month. This year, Troika Dialog, a Moscow Investment Bank, has estimated that Gazprom's profits will drop to \$16.7 billion on revenues of \$104 billion. As the country's largest taxpayer, Gazprom contributed \$40 billion to the state's coffer last year, including export tariffs, profit and mineral extraction taxes. This year, financial analysts who follow the company estimate, those payments will fall by nearly half, to around \$22.5 billion" (The New York Times, Friday, May 22, 2009, p. 5). Save for the natural gas and oil exploitation, the other economic areas have proven themselves uncompetitive. In the structure of Russia's exports the largest ratio is held by weapons industry.

Russia has been severely affected by the world financial crisis. Although the proud owner of an apparent sound economy, which has generated an economic growth of 8% per year, positive estimates have forecasted only a 2.2% growth for Russia this year. Depending on the level of oil and natural gas prices, such percentage may turn out to be even higher, namely around 5 or even 10%. At the moment, the unemployment rate of the country is of 7.7%, which in fact has been the highest rate of its sort since 2005, thus making for the fact that 5.8 million Russians are in fact unemployed (The Economist, Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, print edition).

#### REFORM AND STRATEGIC IDENTITY IN CHINA

Today China's political elite takes pride in the success of the reforms initiated in 1978 by Deng Xiaoping. China's current contribution to the world's GDP is of 6%, in comparison to just 1.8% in 1978, and as a result more than 200 million Chinese have managed to make their way out of poverty (The Economist, Dec 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, print edition). However, the history behind the said reform has been re-written. Today no one mentions the Wall of Democracy, which was a 200m long structure built in front of a bus garage in the west side of Tiananmen square. The

posters applied here by Chinese citizens showed the latter's desire for freedom and democracy. The wall was destroyed by Deng Xiaoping in the winter of 1979. Also, today there is no mentioning of a declaration issued by Deng Xiaoping, which predicted that by 2050 the country's political ruling body would be elected by the population's direct vote. The reform as such, along with opening to new ideas, were not items on Deng Xiaoping's agenda 30 years ago, says Bao Tong, a former member of the party's Central Committee who was jailed for sympathizing with the protesters in 1989. Deng was then focused on obtaining political consensus aimed at getting the country out of the economic chaos generated by the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s and the Cultural Revolution from 1966. The reform in China truly starts in 1992, when Deng felt the time was right to master a decisive blow to Mao's supporters. "Two of the most far-reaching reforms of the past 30 years—the dismantling of tens of thousands of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the privatisation of urban housing—did not take off until the late 1990s. In the case of enterprise closures, massive suffering (and not a little protest) was involved as millions were left unemployed" (The Economist, Dec 11th 2008, print edition).

Mao Zedong died in 1976. He had already understood the negative social consequences brought about by the uneven exchanges occurred between China and the West. The peasants were faced with poverty because of cheap products coming from abroad, which in turn had suppressed the inland manufacturing industry, the Shanghai proletariat was overexploited and underpaid, and young women received education in missionary schools. As a result, the strategic identity thought out by Mao Zedong turned out to be anti-Western. In his opinion, the most revolutionary state of the world was not The Soviet Union, but China (Casey, Wright, 2008). The treaty signed by Mao in 1950 turned China in a satellite country of the Soviet Union for the next 30 years. However, Mao changed his mind quickly and, at the end of the 1950s, he denied the treaty, which forced Khrushchev to remove from China the soviet technicians who had helped build economic projects in the country (Rațiu, 1990). After Mao Zedong's death in 1976, China turned to the West. Such change in trend was not due to certain value-based affinity, but rather to aversion to the Soviet Union. In December 1978, after two meetings with the Mao group within the Chinese Communist Party, a press release is issued, where the word reform is mentioned only once. The idea to put peasants in possession of their land is rejected immediately, while "(...) Mao's disastrous 'people's communes' were praised. Deng's reformist victory was suffused with compromise, a pattern that persists to this day" (The Economist, Dec 11th 2008, print edition). Nevertheless, the land reform started in Anhui Province. The peasants in a commune started secretly to divide the land into lots, although they were aware of the death penalty applied to such a breach of law. These peasants were endowed with a very clear sense of property, and would soon receive the support of Wan Li, a Province leader and ally of Deng. Other peasants followed the example set in the Anhui Province. In 1984, when the concept of communes was dissolved, such elements

had already undergone tremendous change. Only the name of «commune» was left from the previous understanding of a commune. Was the strategic identity outlined by Deng Xiaoping liberal? Or was it rather Friedmanian, namely a strategic identity which values commercial freedom rather than political freedom?

“The definition of freedom, offered by Friedman, where political freedom is not essential, but rather useless in comparison to unlimited freedom of trade, complies with the vision which starts to take shape in the CCP’s office” (Klein, 2008, p. 199). In 1980 Deng Xiaoping met Milton Friedman in Beijing. Privatisation and increase of the population’s consumption power were the first two most important ideas behind the reforms put together by Deng Xiaoping. A third line of the reform was to gain absolute ruling control. As foreign investors had been entering China, the Chinese government founded a new police unit. With 400.000 members, the unit’s mission was to suppress economic crimes, namely strikes and demonstrations, because the economic reforms had not benefitted from the population’s vote (Klein, 2008). In other words, the strategic identity created by Deng Xiaoping did not take into consideration the realities of the country. The 74,000 demonstrations of 2004 stand proof of this, such a number being seven times higher than the demonstrations occurred ten years before (Greenspan, 2008). Thus China became an earthly paradise for multinationals. “No other country in the world offered better conditions than China : low taxes and fees, corrupted officials, and, most important, workforce to one’s disposal, asking for pay next to nothing and not daring to request higher salaries or better working conditions for fear of violent retaliation by authorities” (Klein, 2008, p. 204). Wang Hui, the author of *China’s New Order* and organizer of the demonstrations in the Tiananmen square, asserts that the among the demonstrators of 1989 were not only students. The protesters belonged in fact to all walks of life, and the root of their distress had to do with the revolutionary economic changes implemented by Deng Xiaoping. After the suppression of the demonstration in the Tiananmen square, Deng came across to the Chinese people as defender of capitalism, not of communism. Four years later, another president, who was to be tempted by the shock doctrine, proceeded in a similar manner in Moscow. By dissolving the Parliament, namely the symbol of democracy, president Yeltsin defended the freedom of trade detrimentally to the rights of the population. The economic principles formulated by Milton Friedman were thus more important than the Russian people. The loss of moral balance brought about by the massacre in the Tiananmen square was the trigger to start applying the shock doctrine in China, concludes Naomi Klein.

The Soviet Union dissolved because of the liberal reforms applied by Mikhail Gorbachev, says Alan Greenspan. The manner in which the Chinese elite controls the traffic of information on the Internet is a sign of that they do not wish to repeat the mistakes of Glasnost and Perestroika. China is today the largest goods consumer in the world, the second oil consumer and the largest steel producer. Also, entrepreneurship begins to take shape in the country. However, the

difficulties China must overcome are still huge : rural population<sup>2</sup> cut off from the economic boom, not being allowed to migrate to the city, inefficient state businesses<sup>3</sup>, along with the banking system serving them, corruption<sup>4</sup>, lack of competition in the financing system etc (Greenspan, 2008).

Today China exports products which are more sophisticated than ten years ago. Alan Greenspan wonders whether the products' sophistication level represents the result of technological development. It seems it does not. China does not manufacture products with a high added value. China only assembles them. Real technological development has in fact come to a deadlock, labor productivity is low, as are the salaries. Today, the average salary paid to a Chinese citizen represents 6% of the average salary of Hong-Kong and 9% of that of Taiwan (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2008). China lowers production costs not by means of technological innovation, but by cheating. "(...) innovation inside the factory turns to cutting costs, often in ways that range from unsavoury to dangerous. Packaging is cheapened, chemical formulations altered, sanitary standards curtailed, and on and on, in a series of continual product debasements" (The Economist, May 14<sup>th</sup> 2009, print edition). Emile Durkheim noticed that labor division was little developed in China and Russia at the end of the XIXth century. Based on the French sociologist's ideas, professor Radu Baltasiu with the Faculty of Sociology within the Bucharest University argues that the technologic deadlock of today's China owes to the weak dynamic density within the Chinese society. In the absence of moral or dynamic density of a society, labor division progress will be low. Technological development is rapid in a society where people are kept together by "(...) mechanical causes and impulsive forces, such as blood relations, the awareness of belonging to the same territory, ancestors' culture, tradition community and so on" (Durkheim, 2001, p. 294). One learns from a classic sociologist, such as Emile Durkheim, about the importance of cultural under layer of any strategic identity. An identity-focused project which takes no account of the

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<sup>2</sup> "But the rural power structure has changed little since commune days. Land remains collectively owned, even though it is leased out to individual households to farm. This system has shut farmers out from the boom that cities have enjoyed as a result of the rapid emergence in the past few years of a free market in property" (The Economist, Dec 11th 2008, print edition).

<sup>3</sup> "Non-state-owned enterprises are now producing two-thirds of China's manufacturing output, but SOEs dominate key sectors such as banking, telecoms, energy and the media. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of SOEs fell from 370,000 to 120,000, but this still left assets worth \$1.3 trillion in state control. There is much more work to do" (ibid.).

<sup>4</sup> "Not for the first time, Hu Jintao, the party's boss and China's president, rightly picks out two big problems: the widening gap between China's mostly urban rich and its mostly rural poor, and the party's lack of «internal democracy»—comrade-speak for accountability and the courage to question and debate. (...)As in any fast-developing economy, for all its successes China's breakneck growth masks a multitude of problems, from rampant corruption and devastating pollution to a frail banking system and the lack of independent courts to uphold the rule of law. (...)These days, the income disparity between China's richest few and poorest many (peasants, migrant workers, pensioners) would make many a modern capitalist blush" (The Economist, Oct 11th 2007, print edition).

fundamental features of national identity can only lead to underdevelopment. The shock doctrine, as the strategic identity taken in by the Chinese elite, is based on the freedom of trade. However, since it does not give importance to the local specificities, which are manifest in the culture and inertial forces of the Chinese space, such a strategic identity could become anti-national to the end.

#### IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Sometimes the strategic identity adopted by the governmental elite proves itself to be just an identity temptation, which, as we have mentioned at the beginning of our article, disproves the ethnicity, language, religion and the social memory of one nation. Consequently, the local mental map is distorted, the ethnic and historic borders are redrawn, values are reinvented, and nation is derailed from its specific identity path. Therefore, we say that a strategic identity which ignores the national culture cannot hold a strategic function. For the national interest defined by such an identity weakens one people's vitality. It is strategic only that identity model that has as a background the specific culture of one nation. Reform projects are able to capitalize the geographic, demographic, economic and cultural potentialities of a nation only by grasping the inertial forces of a space.

Constructivists contend that social reality is constructed rather by individuals and creative discourses, neglecting the existence of a social reality which is deeply embedded in social practices. This pre-existing social reality is going to resist any attempt to change it, especially when it is challenged by incompatible world views.

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