

Regional differences

Shanghai vs. Beijing

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Historic and geographic uniqueness of each region

- Diverse physical traits, dialects and traditions
- Multicultural, multi-religious and multiethnic (the majority Han and 55 other ethnic groups) society
- Political division in history: The Southern and Northern Dynasties
- Agricultural division: Northern and Southern China marks “Wheat” and “Rice” cultivation
- Economic division: Coastal China vs. The Interior, Urban vs. Rural China



Yellow River (Huang He /黄河) and Yangtze River (Chang Jiang /长江)

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Cultural Developments

- Emphasis on uniformity and upholding the “authentic Chinese tradition” and “monochromatic socialist culture” in pre-reform China: forbid popular culture and cosmopolitan culture
- Openness to the outside world and rapid development of market economy in the 1980s: acknowledge regional cultures and urban identities
- Major ideological and political conflicts during the 20th century:
 - Tradition vs. Modernity
 - Nationalism vs. Westernization
 - Uniformity vs. Diversity
- Today: face the challenges of modernization and diversification of value systems
- Chinese cities:

Headquarters of
bureaucratic
administration



Centers of
economic
development



Hotbeds of socio-
political reforms

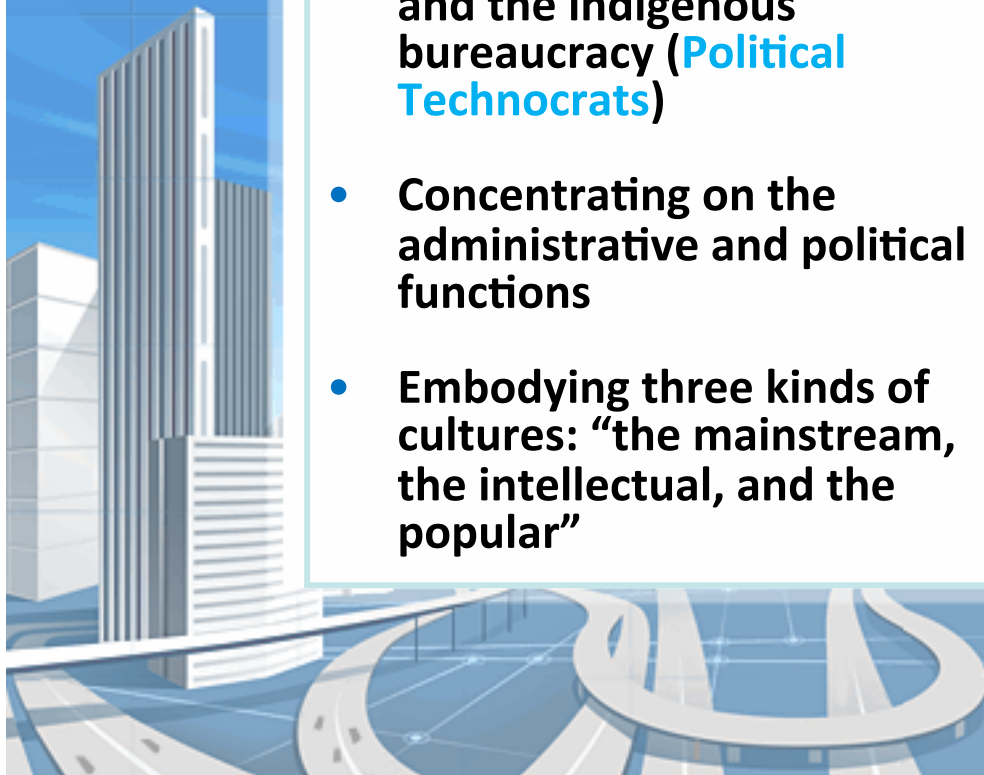
Urban Subcultures and Regional Identities: Beijing vs. Shanghai

Beijing/北京

- An “**administrative-cultural city**”
- Dominated by the literati and the indigenous bureaucracy (**Political Technocrats**)
- Concentrating on the administrative and political functions
- Embodying three kinds of cultures: “the mainstream, the intellectual, and the popular”

Shanghai/上海

- A “**metropolis-city**”
- Led by a managerial and entrepreneurial class (**Economic Entrepreneurs**)
- Emerged due to its advantageous urban location and dynamic economic activities
- A new “civilization of the coast” – an “enterprising cosmopolitan urban society”
- Many subcultures /Chinese & Western civilization meet – high tolerance for diverse views and lifestyles, integrated elite and popular cultures



Dominant images of Chinese regions

Beijing culture (jingpai / 京派)

- “aristocratic”
- “noble”
- “rigorous”
- “traditional”
- “elitist”
- “bureaucratic”

Shanghai culture (haipai/ 海派)

- “popular”
- “common”
- “leisurely”
- “utilitarian”
- “commercial”
- “modern”
- “colonial”

Two sharply contrasting subcultures

Dominant images of Chinese regions

Beijingese/北京人

- Enthusiasm about politics: Chatting about major topics such as national affairs and politics – political nature of social life
- Emphasize political and educational credentials
- Devalue commerce and the comforts of life: less “contract consciousness”
- A “broad-minded attitude”
- Stress “fraternal loyalty” in relationship with other people
- Tend to emphasize *Guan Xi*/关系 [connections]
- “Capital city mentality”

Shanghainese/上海人

- “Shrewdness”
- Stress “practical benefits” and emphasize concrete material interests: “money-oriented and business-minded”
- “Standardization and etiquette:” stronger legal consciousness
- “Secularization:” new standards of actual achievements, popularism and rationalism – practical-minded
- “Westernization”
- Commitment to pluralism and diversity: high degree of tolerance
- “Cosmopolitan” and “glamorous”
- Individuality

Group characteristics

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Thank you!

