

Trends in Chinese Political Rhetoric “Go Global”

Popular media in the West have recently adopted a quotation taken from Chinese political propaganda: China goes global. This phenomenon is part of the discussion on the global “shopping tour” of the so-called BRIC (referring to Brazil, Russia, India, and China) states. “India goes global” or “Russia goes global” have thus conquered the headlines of newspapers and online media, too.

“China goes global” has been translated from the Chinese phrase Zhongguo Zou Chuqu 中国走出去, which literally means “China goes out.” Originally, it refers to a political strategy formulated by the Chinese government to make Chinese firms internationally competitive. It had been introduced as the Going-Global-Strategy in 2000 by Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji. Its reduction to this catchy phrase confirms our preliminary assumption that political campaigns attempt to stylise themselves as “trendy” in order to appeal to the public. This also seems to have worked with Western media, which – wanted or not – have picked up and modified the quotation in a way to make it sound catchy to Western ears. This process represents a convergence of two different trends: First, the recent political trend in China of propagating the internationalization of companies, and second, the linguistic trend in Western media to make things (or countries) “go global.”

My project will therefore attempt to trace the itinerary of the quotation “China goes out” from Chinese propaganda to Western popular media and examine the changes it underwent during this journey.