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China's Vision for Global Governance: A Community of Shared Future for Mankind

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the Chinese government's new foreign policy slogan A Community of Shared Future for Mankind (CSFM) to discern how China presents and constructs the concept as a narrative to foreign audiences. It finds that Chinese authorities put forth three narratives through the CSFM vision: an international system narrative of global interdependence, an issue narrative of global governance failure, and an identity narrative of China as a responsible and capable leader. Together, they formulate the strategic narrative of an interconnected international system facing increasing global threats, demanding for immediate resolution. Through these narratives, Beijing positions itself as a responsible stakeholder within the current world order, working to improve the system and contribute to solving pressing global challenges. To understand and situate Beijing's international strategic priorities, this paper employs discourse analysis to analyse speeches made by leading Chinese authorities from 2014 to 2019. It draws upon strategic narrative as a framework to decipher key themes and storylines within these speeches, all of which together serve as building blocks of the CSFM narrative.

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A Community of Shared Future for Mankind (CSFM)

By

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1. Introduction

In recent years, Chinese foreign policy under the leadership of Xi Jinping has featured the new diplomatic slogan 'A Community of Shared Future for Mankind (CSFM)'. First introduced in the 18th Party Congress Work Report of 2012, CSFM presents the Chinese vision of an ideal international order against a current backdrop of increasing global interdependence and challenges. CSFM refers to a group of people or nations bonded together by common interests and fate (Zhang 2018). To achieve such a community, the Chinese Community Party (CCP) states that efforts at the international level must be made in five aspects: political partnership, security, economic development, cultural exchanges and the environment (Xi 2015a).

Since its inception, CSFM has been increasingly promoted in Chinese political dialogue. CSFM's centrality to Chinese policy can be seen in the 2018 Amendment to the PRC Constitution, where it was added as a new foreign policy goal (NPC Observer 2018). It starred in Xi's speeches during prominent international occasions such as the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 and the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2018. The term gained additional international traction when the UN incorporated it into a resolution titled "Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development". Chinese diplomats and media deemed this as a universal recognition of the concept and a huge Chinese contribution to global governance (Xinhua 2017).

Beijing has presented CSFM to audiences abroad as a core concept that guides contemporary Chinese foreign policy. As a foreign policy goal, CSFM encapsulates the overarching interests and perspectives of the leadership within the international system. President Xi presents CSFM as the latest solution to global challenges and as the direction that humanity should follow to ensure peace and development during a time of increasing global interdependence and instability (Xi 2017a). Derived as a conclusion from deep Chinese thinking and analysis, the proposal of CSFM reflects how the leadership conceives of the current state of global affairs, as well as the best solution forward. Such slogans, although easily dismissed as vague or as propaganda, play a role in shaping

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Beijing's political actions (Callahan 2015). Examining CSFM can enhance understanding of Chinese beliefs regarding the global order and point to their aspired role within it.

The need to decode and understand CSFM is further driven by how existing literature on the concept is limited, with the majority of work deriving from Chinese scholars and few from overseas ones. International literature mentions CSFM briefly in broader discussions of other foreign policy topics, with absent or limited analysis of CSFM's meaning and implications in a global context (e.g Sørensen 2015; Callahan 2017). Observations from abroad also often take CSFM as '...simply an international expansion of domestic propaganda' (Mokry 2018:4).

Although the concept is relatively new, a lack of focused literature from abroad is significant considering how the slogan is international orientated and how comparatively rich Chinese literature is. CSFM is applauded by Chinese scholars as a major contribution of Chinese wisdom to the world (Zhao 2018), a new framework that transcends traditional International Relations (IR) thought (Sun 2016), and as encapsulating the dreams of China and the world (Chen 2016). The absence of English literature on CSFM signifies the broader need for Western scholarship to better engage with Chinese proposals on the world order, to understand Chinese conceptualizations of international affairs (Mokry 2018).

Given the rising prominence of CSFM internationally and within Chinese academia, this paper aims to deconstruct the concept and situate it in terms of Chinese aspirations in the international system. To this end, this paper poses the following question: *how does the Chinese leadership construct and present the beliefs and visions that make up the narrative of CSFM, to audiences abroad?*

With the framework of strategic narrative and the use of discourse analysis, this research examines a selection of translated English speeches by CCP leaders from 2014-2019 to discern how CSFM is constructed and presented as a narrative to foreign audiences. This is achieved by first identifying six prominent storylines and corresponding themes relating to CSFM, in CCP speeches. A narrative approach is then employed to synthesize and situate these storylines according to how it constructs three broader narratives: an international system narrative of global interdependence, an issue narrative of global governance failure, and an identity narrative of China as a responsible and capable leader. Together, they formulate the strategic narrative of CSFM: an interconnected international system that faces increasing global threats (such as the limitation of global governance) demanding for immediate resolution. Through the deployment of this narrative,

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Beijing also aims to present itself as a responsible stakeholder that cooperates within the current world order to address global issues. In a similar tone, leaders also aim to dispel fears of China as a revisionist power that seeks to overthrow the existing US-led order.

Whilst the employed narrative approach serves as a valuable framework to understand how Chinese leaders construct and socialize CSFM, the practice of identifying and deconstructing narratives can be problematic. Although identified narratives in this research are guided by a literature review and methodological approach, they are not all encompassing. Thus, findings can only be taken as a general representation of how the CCP attempts to establish meaning to CSFM. As the emphasis of this research is also purely on narrative construction, there is an absence of analysis on how CSFM is received and the extent to which it truly reflects Beijing's aims. Nonetheless, this paper provides a rich and informed analysis of the ideas which underpin CSFM as a strategic narrative. It serves as a valuable starting point to further understand the new slogan, and the extent to which it may allow observers to infer Chinese strategic priorities.

2.   Theoretical Framework

2.1 Discourse Theory

Discourse theory outlines that understandings and accounts of the social world are created, rather than given. This process is achieved through communication, in the form of language. Language is a medium oriented towards action and function, to construct versions of the social world (Elliot 1996). Discourse is thus concerned with how language is used to represent social practices from a specific point of view (Fairclough 2015).

Discourse theory is concerned with questions of power, as discourse can shape beliefs, values and desires (Fairclough 2015). Discourse situates social practices and defines the range of actions that are possible. In IR, discourse can serve as a form of power resource for political actors, allowing them to mould domestic and global perspectives. Certain actors are in stronger positions than others to influence discourse, thereby controlling the perspectives that are widely accepted as valuable and true. Discourse theory outlines that 'the way we act in relation to a subject is not the most important thing but rather it is how we think and talk about it, and who thinks and talks about it' (Zhao 2016:540).

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2.2 Strategic Narratives

As a form of communication that moulds how social occurrences are discussed, discourse can influence and be shaped by narratives. Narrative is a widespread and powerful form of discourse in human communication (Patterson & Monroe 1998). Discourses rely greatly on narratives, as humans rely on narratives to understand the world. In the past two decades, IR has undergone a 'narrative turn,' with academics and policymakers viewing narrative as a valuable way to understand and explain political phenomena (Roberts 2006).

Narratives facilitate "meaning making," by simplifying complex situations into an understandable chain of events to formulate and maintain worldviews (Shenhav 2006). This worldview is a product of a particular perspective, formed with consideration of specific events, interests and goals over others. Studying narratives can generate insight on an actor's self-understanding, interests, and ideas about how the world is and should function (Antoniades, Miskimmon & O'Louhglin 2010).

Narratives can be employed during times of change, such as the current international context, which is characterized by globalization and the growing importance of the East Asian region.
As a form of persuasive communication, strategic narrative sets off from a starting point of understanding change in the international system by asking: what are the best methods to influence international affairs? (Roselle, Miskimmon & O'Loughlin 2014). Here, communication becomes a key tool. Employing persuasive communication tactics can enhance a nation's international attractiveness by shaping favourable foreign opinions. Narratives achieve this by forging cooperative behaviours and mitigating tensions, such as between the U.S. and China (Rudd 2015). As a persuasive tactic, they also conceptually integrate values to unite diverse political perspectives (Snyder 2015). Narratives and discourse thus have the potential to influence political action.

For the purpose of this paper, strategic narrative is conceptualized as a form of persuasive communication, involving the construction of a worldview by state actors for the achievement of political objectives. This worldview includes a dimension of intention, where events and identities are formed to '...give determined meaning to past, present and future in order to achieve political objectives,' (Antoniades, Miskimmon & O'Loughlin 2010:5). The effects of a successful narrative are power and legitimacy, tied to whichever narrative is successful in giving shared and accepted meaning. Narratives thus involve a political struggle between states over 'whose story wins' (Nye 2004).

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3.   Literature Review

3.1 Chinese Strategic Narratives

The interconnectivity between discourse, language and power is a relationship that the CCP has long acknowledged. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, leaders have constantly worked to create a favourable public opinion and positive public image, as a means to guarantee the government's hold on power. Beijing has since incorporated methods of political public relations and communications in its thought work and propaganda efforts (Brady 2008).

One method of communication is strategic narratives. From Mao Zedong's "Five Principles," to Deng Xiaoping's "independent and peaceful foreign policy," to Hu Jintao's "Harmonious World," to Xi's current "Community of Shared Future," China has employed strategic narratives as part of an effort to communicate its values to the world. Policy implementation at all levels in China is shaped with consideration to questions of 'How should this be put? What happens if we put it like that? Will putting it like this put people off?' (Schoenhals 1992:3). Determining the most appropriate formulations of language is crucial to controlling what is being discussed, and by extension what is being done within Chinese politics (Schoenhals 1992). Such attention to the formulation and reception of Chinese ideas can be interpreted as part of CCP's efforts to increase its global influence by guiding discourses.

3.2 China's Discursive Power

The global community's scepticism and fear over China's recent rise has shaped Beijing's sensitivity to its international image and feelings of misjudgement (d'Hooghe 2014). As such, the CCP has devoted attention to its communication initiatives, an effort that can be understood through the concepts of discursive power *(huayu quan* 话语权) and the West's discursive hegemony (*huayu baquan* 话语霸权).

As a popular topic within China, discourse power is broadly interpreted as a "right to speak," a de facto "power discourse," correlated directly with national strength, involving "power of the media" requiring its internationalization; or an aspect of soft power, involving values and culture (Kania 2018). This paper conceives discursive power as a blend of these conceptions, in addition to being reflective of power relations which together, enable an actor the "right to speak," and a "right to be heard."

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Discursive power should be understood in terms of existing international power relations, which determine which actors are more able to shape global structure, processes and institutions in their favour. Power is concerned with 'the legitimacy of particular governing arrangements, who gets to participate, whose voice matters, and whose vote counts,' (Barnett & Duvall 2004:8). As a form of public opinion capital, discursive power builds upon these existing power relations to allow actors to extensively promulgate its ideas and values over others.

Within Chinese academia, a dominant perspective is that China is suffering from a power deficit due to the limits of its soft power resources (culture and values), in comparison with stronger power sources (economy and military) (Zheng 2013; Meng & Wang 2015). Xi echoed this by emphasizing that Chinese values should be spread by increasing China's international discourse power, '…to make our culture known through international communication…' (Xi 2013:179). China has thus begun to pursue a discursive power strategy that comprises of setting facts straight and innovating rules, through foreign policy slogans such as CSFM (Zhao 2018).

The CCP's focus on discursive power is understood within academia in terms of the nations' economic development. As China participates and invests globally, its interests become intertwined with that of the world. Participation in international affairs serves as an important means to protect global interests (Zhang 2008). Zheng (2013) frames the necessity of this participation according to a lack of discursive power. 'China is now the second largest economy in the world, with an increased economic influence. Yet, the right to speak in international economic affairs has not emerged, let alone the right to speak in world politics' (Zheng 2013).[1]

Meng and Wang (2015) similarly iterate this but offer a more optimistic view of China's prospects. Accompanying China's growing economic resources is also the decline in the West's economic strength, signifying an opportunity for China to participate in global governance and improve international discourse power through the construction of a new IR theory system.

The call to strengthen discursive power is additionally framed according to an issue of inequality between China and the West, compounded by Chinese feelings of misunderstanding by the

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[1]Own translation, original text*: ¨Zhōngguó xiànzài yǐjīng shì shìjiè shàng dì èr dà jīngjì tǐ, wài zài de jīngjì yǐngxiǎng lì zēng dà, dàn jíshǐ shì zài guójì jīngjì shàng de huàyǔ quán yě bìng méiyǒu xiǎnxiàn chūlái, zhìshǎo shì yǔqí jīngjì lìliàng bù xiāngfú de, gèng bùyòng shuō zài shìjiè zhèngzhì shàng de huàyǔ quánle* 中国现在已经是世界上第二大经济体，外在的经济影响力增大，但即使是在国际经济上的话语权也并没有显现出来，至少是与其经济力量不相符的，更不用说在世界政治上的话语权了.¨

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international community. For Meng and Wang (2015), the discursive hegemony of the West allows it to maintain a leading position in the international system. China thus needs to enhance their discursive power so they can create their own political models rather than following the established Western order (Zhao 2018). Focus on discursive power is further shaped by Chinese frustration with the lack of desired results in its initiatives to strengthen its international attractiveness (Melissen & d'Hooghe 2014). As Xi emphasizes, China must 'grasp international discourse'' to effectively spread a 'good voice and story of China' (Xi 2013).

3.3 Global Governance and Power

Global governance offers a setting for the CCP to increase its discursive power. In the current era of globalization, a need emerges for international governance and rule-making to facilitate global cooperation. Global governance can be conceptualised in terms of power as governance includes rules and institutions, both of which shape social life and are fundamental elements of power. In global governance, discourses can influence an actor's hold or claim to power. Discourses generate different social capacities for actors to define and pursue their interests, influencing their ability to shape their own fate (Barnett & Duvall 2005). Specifically, discourse can create a productive form of power, which '…orients social activity in particular directions, defines what constitutes legitimate knowledge, and shapes whose knowledge matters,' (Barnett & Duvall 2005:4).

3.4 Global Governance Failure

CSFM is referred to by scholars as a global governance concept (e.g., Zhao 2018; Chen 2016), which is a tool to understand changes at the global level (Hewson & Sinclair 1999). Amidst the need for global rule-making and governance, institutions of the international system have failed to meet this need, resulting in disorder (Qin 2015). As a popular view amongst Chinese scholars, global governance failure is evident and an outcome of a long-standing international order characterized by political coercion, U.S-led military alliances, and Cold War mentalities (Sun 2016).

According to Qin (2015), global governance failure is cited to be largely due to ideational limitations, where current ideas underpinning global governance such as monism, rationalism and dualism, lag behind reality. To address this, it is necessary to reconstruct global governance ideas to ones of pluralism, partnership and participation (Qin 2015). CSFM is thus seen by Chinese academics as the ideational solution to global governance failure, which '…has undermined the world's confidence in the Washington Consensus, making more imperative the search for an alternative model that is more just…' (Zhao 2018:27). By noting the failure of the current system,

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the Chinese perspective emphasizes the need for alternatives. With its focus on equal representation, peaceful development and win-win cooperation, CSFM global governance concept is thereby regarded by Chinese scholars as this viable solution.

Non-Chinese scholars adopt more critical views of China's global governance proposals. Contrary to beliefs which stress the existence of global governance failure and Chinese contributions to address this, Michael Pillsbury (2015) sees the notion of global governance failure as a constructed one, part of China's effort to delegitimize the West's global authority to create a new one. China must create an image of terminal decline in order to offer an appealing blueprint for a new one (Schweller & Pu 2011).

The idea of CSFM as a viable blueprint is further contested by Western scholars who see it as reflective of long-standing Chinese rejections to the Western-led international order, and an attempt to subvert Western influence (Tobin 2018). Xi's proposal of a specifically China-ASEAN CSFM is highlighted as one such example of a vision which excludes the U.S. and positions China at the centre (Sørensen 2015).

Apprehensions about CSFM are further shaped by a perceived lack of credibility. As d'Hooghe (2014:40) notes, '...official messengers are never fully trusted, even less when they come from a country with an authoritarian leadership that is not considered legitimate by the public.' As a top-down initiative from an authoritarian government, CSFM could suffer from a lack of legitimacy. Developments within China such as repressive domestic crackdowns and prevailing gaps between the rich and the poor stand at odds with Beijing's assertions that it holds the answers to global issues of peace. CSFM is thereby interpreted by Tobin (2018:166) as China's '...highly orchestrated, ostentatious campaign to trumpet its vision.'

This section introduced the frameworks and concepts to understand how CSFM is constructed. To decode CSFM, this research employs discourse theory and a framework of strategic narrative. As forms of communication which are interlinked and able to reinforce one another, discourse and narrative as a valuable lens to understand the social aspect of power in IR, Chinese communication initiatives, and conceptions of discursive power. This section also discussed the concept of global governance, situating it in terms of discursive power, and of the Chinese belief in global governance failure, which articulates how the current liberal international system is inadequate in addressing

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issues facing the world today. In this context of power, communication and global governance, Beijing's proposal of CSFM represents its effort to harness narrative for strategic purposes.

4. Methodology

4.1 Source Type

As CSFM will be examined as part of the CCP's external (international) communications strategy, English-language translated speeches are utilized for this analysis. These sources are most relevant to address the question of how CSFM is presented to foreign audiences, such as representatives from government, international organisations and multilateral institutions.

Whilst translated documents could reflect the ideas of a translator rather than the CCP, they can be taken as representative of official discourse due to the CCP's exclusive control over publishing. Communicating narratives of China to the world relies on the translation of 'China's voice' (Li & Li 2015:424). Thus, translation follows a set of regulated and secretive procedures. Translators are members of the CCP or hold senior positions in political and professional institutions (Zappone 2018). This obliges them to uphold ideologies and pursue politically correct translations. Political translation is an institutionalized, norm-governed and ideologically-motivated practice, underlining China's preoccupation with how its ideas come across to foreign audiences (Li & Li 2015).

4.2 Source Selections and Coding

Whilst the original Chinese wording of CSFM [*renlei mingyun gongtong ti* 人类命运共同体] has remained the same since its inception, foreign audiences have heard the terms Community of Common Destiny, Community of Common Future, Community of Shared Destiny, Community of Shared Interests, and Community of Shared Responsibilities. These were most prominently featured in 2013-2016, with leaders shifting to almost exclusively using CSFM from mid-2016 onwards[2] (see Appendix 1). According to Foreign Minister Wang Yi (2016), changes in CSFM terminology were also a result of the natural development of the concept. Thus, this research codes CSFM and related terms as variations of the same concept.

CSFM was first introduced in the 18th Party Congress Work Report of November 2012., The encoding process began with locating and reviewing all speeches with occurrences of CSFM from late 2012 onwards. Texts were pulled from the "Speeches" sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC (n.d.) and the English version of the State Council of the PRC website (n.d.)

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[2] For the appendix materials, interested readers may contact the author through info@mappingchina.org.

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due to their exclusive focus on foreign policy, international audiences and the large availability of English speeches in comparison to other outlets or departments.

All speeches were reviewed manually to determine the number of occurrences of CSFM. The results outlined that CSFM occurrences were present in 193 speeches from January 2013-November 2019 (see Appendix 1). For the final text selection, only speeches that included CSFM at least five times were considered to ensure an overarching content focus on the concept, rather than a brief mentioning of it in the context of other events or issues. A total of twenty-three speeches met this criterion, still a large number considering the time and word constraints of this research. As such, one speech each year from 2014-2019 was selected, on the basis of highest frequency of CSFM mentions. Although CSFM was first brought up in speeches in 2013, there were no speeches that year which highlighted CSFM or related concepts five or more times. The decision to select texts based on years was also to account for any developments that could impact how often and in what ways CSFM is presented.

With the goal of analysing a total of twelve texts, six more speeches were chosen according to target audience. To have a range of speeches targeting various audiences is important, as messages could be presented differently depending on the audience. The final selected speeches were delivered at academic, region-specific, human rights, security and development forums. Others were made after Party Congresses, or at the UN Office in Geneva. All speeches were delivered by Xi or high-ranking leaders such as Wang Yi,[3] Yang Jiechi,[4] Zheng Zeguang, Li Baodong or Liu Zhenmin.[5] Further details about the selected speeches can be found in Appendix 2.

4.3 Narrative Approach

Unlike other qualitative frameworks, narrative research does not set definitive starting or finishing points. There is an absence of overall rules about suitable materials, methods of analysis, or the best level at which to study stories (Squire 2008). As such, this research adopts its own approach based on the conception of narrative as a constructed, temporal and politically motivated form of story building.

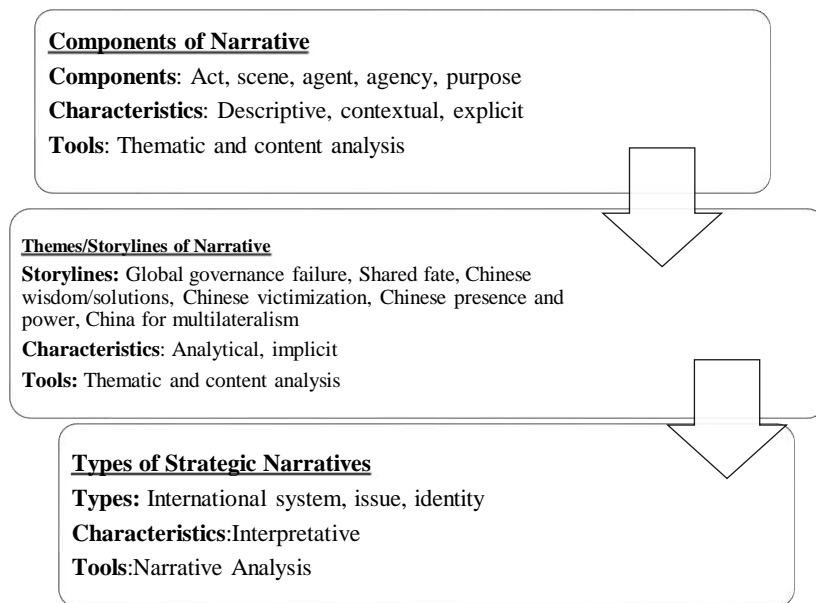[3] Wang Yi is the Foreign Minister and a member of the 13th State Council, the executive organ of the CCP.
[4] Yang Jiechi was a member of the 12th State Council and is currently a member of the Politburo and the Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission.
[5] Zheng Zeguang, Li Baodong and Liu Zhenmin are Vice Foreign Ministers.

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For this paper, CSFM is examined through three layers of analysis, each of which employs different tools of content, thematic and narrative analysis. The layers of analysis build upon each other and decode different dimensions of narrative to discern how CSFM is presented. Chronologically, this process begins with identifying the components of a narrative, themes/storylines of narrative, and finally, the types of strategic narratives. Each layer's details, function and tools are outlined below in the process created uniquely for this research and expanded upon in the subsequent sections.

Graph 1: Narrative Analysis Process (own design)

Components of Narrative
Components: Act, scene, agent, agency, purpose
Characteristics: Descriptive, contextual, explicit
Tools: Thematic and content analysis

Themes/Storylines of Narrative
Storylines: Global governance failure, Shared fate, Chinese wisdom/solutions, Chinese victimization, Chinese presence and power, China for multilateralism
Characteristics: Analytical, implicit
Tools: Thematic and content analysis

Types of Strategic Narratives
Types: International system, issue, identity
Characteristics:Interpretative
Tools:Narrative Analysis

4.4 Components of Narrative

This research first sets out to identify and briefly describe CSFM as a narrative. As outlined by Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle (2017:7) there are five components of a narrative: character or actors (agent), setting/environment/space (scene), conflict or action (act), tools/behaviour (agency) and resolution/or suggested resolution/goal (purpose). This criterion qualifies CSFM as a narrative, confirming the suitability of the narrative approach and strategic narrative as an analytical framework. Identifying components of narrative also explicitly sets out the who, when and where, what, how and why elements, which contextualize actions and motives for China's CSFM narrative (Van Noort 2017).

To gather these components, descriptive coding was conducted on the 19th Party Congress Work Report from 2017. Convened every five years, Party Congresses and their work reports set forth guidelines of the highest authority and are the most authoritative public recitation of CCP policy (Miller 2019). Although CSFM was first proposed in the Party Congress of 2012, it was only

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mentioned briefly and in the early stages of its formulation. The Work Report from 2017 is more indicative of the current Chinese perspective of the geo-political landscape, and its foreign policy aims. In the table below, excerpts about CSFM are referenced in relation to the components of a narrative. The purpose of this descriptive coding is not meant to serve as a complete account of the components of the CSFM narrative, but rather as a summary of the agent, scene, act, agency and purpose.

Table 1: Components of Narrative as Presented in 19ᵗʰ Party Congress Report (Xi 2017a)

Components of Narrative	Community of Shared Future for Mankind
Agent (character or actors)	'The Communist Party of China,' (50)
Scene (setting)	'Changes in the global governance system and the international order...' (50) 'The world… [that faces] growing uncertainties and destabilizing factors,' (50).
Act (conflict or action)	'As human beings we have many common challenges to face,' (50). 'Gap between rich and poor...unconventional security threats...major infectious diseases, and climate change…' (50)
Agency (tools/behaviour)	'The Belt and Road Initiative,' (52).
Purpose (resolution or goal)	'Safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and uphold international order,' (21). 'Rise in China's international influence, ability to inspire, and power to shape,' (6).

4.5 Narrative Themes and Storylines

To identify how CSFM is constructed, this methodology focuses on narrative themes and corresponding storylines with the tools of thematic and discourse analysis. Thematic analysis identifies, analyses and reports themes, in a minimally organized manner that describes data in rich detail. It is 'not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures, but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question,' (Braun & Clarke 2006:82).

As defined earlier, narratives can be understood as a specific worldview or reality. They are constructed and maintained by discourses, which shape how communities choose to engage and understand politics in specific ways over others (Schneider 2013). In light of this objective, the thematic method in this research is defined as one that 'unpicks or unravels the surface of reality,' (Braun & Clarke 2006:81).

As part of an overarching communication strategy of the CCP, CSFM and its themes are likely to appear across speeches in order to construct a consistent narrative. State-level communication efforts are reflective of an effort to stay "on message," and as such, speeches are commonly a re-iteration of a focused and repeated "message," (Skonieczny 2019:9).

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This layer of analysis draws inspiration from Skonieczny (2018) by organizing themes according to storylines. Themes signal larger storylines that comprise of an overall narrative strategy. Storylines are often explicitly referenced to by political leaders and invoke specific understandings. They create and maintain discursive order by allowing actors to draw upon categories, such as themes, to give meaning to phenomena. Storylines '[…] play a key role in the positioning of subjects and structures. Political change may therefore well take place through the emergence of new storylines that reorder understandings,' (Hajer 1995:56).

This process followed Neuendorf's (2002) proposal to code categories based on theory and previous studies. Themes and storylines were identified by referencing theories and literature from the first chapter. This step was further guided by Braun and Clarke's definition of what constitutes as a theme, which 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question,' (Braun & Clarke 2006:82).

Themes and storylines that build the narrative of CSFM were identified with the aid of the computer software Quirkos. Formatted and designed for themes or nodes of analysis, Quirkos sorts and presents qualitative data in an organized manner. Each speech was reviewed and coded on Quirkos five times to identify recurring storylines, and their respective themes. Themes could belong to more than one storyline. Each theme did not have to be described in speeches in exactly the same manner, but the emphasized idea of the sentence/phrase needed to include one or more elements of the corresponding theme. To discern this, the preceding and following sentences were considered for contextual purposes (see Appendix 3). The final results of the analysis outlines how many times each theme is presented throughout speeches, signaling how present certain storylines are in the CSFM narrative. The following table outlines the identified storylines and respective themes of the CSFM narrative.

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Table 2: Narrative Themes and Storylines (own data)

	Storylines					
	Global Governance Failure	**Share Fate of the World**	**Chinese Wisdom & Solutions can Solve Global Governance Issues**	**Chinese Victimization/Anti-West**	**Increasing Chinese Presence and Power in the International System**	**China as a Champion of Multilateralism**
Themes	World faces unprecedented challenges	Benefits and interests of all countries shared and intertwined	China's phenomenal progress and development	Unfounded and unfair critiques of China	China is reshaping global norms and values to its favour	Criticisms of unilateralism/bilateralism
	World must unite to face an uncertain future	Shared dream between China and other countries	China contributes to mankind by preserving peace or development	China is a fair, just and responsible power	Increased Chinese voice in international issues	Multi-polarization is the trend of the times
	Criticisms of Cold War mentalities, zero-sum thinking	Shared struggles and interests between China and developing countries	Chinese perspectives and proposals are needed	The West should not intervene in internal affairs of other countries	Increased Chinese soft power	World must unite to face an uncertain future
	Global governance reform is needed or desired	Shared struggles and interests between China and Asian countries	China wants to improve, not overturn the system	Chinese partnerships rather than U.S. alliances	China's phenomenal progress and development	The UN at the core of the international system
	Reform must be inclusive	Positive China-U.S. relations benefit everyone	Chinese traditions of peace and harmony		Chinese participation in multilateral platforms	Chinese participation in multilateral platforms
	Changes at the international level	Common interests between China and Europe	CSFM is warmly received by the international community			Multilateralism promotes peace and development
			New type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation			China wants to improve, not overturn the international system
			Chinese partnerships rather than U.S. alliances			China as a defender of developing countries

4.6 Types of Strategic Narratives

Once the storylines and related themes were established, a narrative approach was employed discern how these fit into a broader narrative of CSFM. To retell the CSFM narrative, the concept will be examined at three levels: international system, identity, and issue. Narratives at these levels can be interpreted as interconnected layers of meaning (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2017). This approach functions as a lens to discern how China understands the international system, its role within the system, and the global issues at hand. It is positioned as the last stage in the research process, as it incorporates and elaborates upon the descriptive layer (components of

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narrative), and analytical layer (themes/storylines of narrative), to achieve a final construction of CSFM. The table below outlines the types of strategic narrative.

Table 3: Types of Strategic Narratives (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2017:7)

International System	**Identity**	**Issue**
How the world is structured, who the players are, and how the system works. E.g. The Cold War	The story of who a political actor is, and what values/goals it has. E.g. The U.S. as a Champion of Democracy	Sets political actions in a context, with an explanation of who the important actors are, what the conflict or issue is, and how a course of action will resolve the issue.

5. Findings and Analysis

As the analysis was designed and implemented to only count how many times each theme and storyline appeared, the corresponding data is presented in a purely quantitative manner. To account for the significance of these results in terms of CSFM socialization, the forthcoming section qualitatively situates these storylines and themes according to types of strategic narratives. It synthesizes themes and storylines found from the content analysis to account for how the CCP prescribes meaning to CSFM at the international system, identity and issue levels.

5.1 Presence of Storylines and Themes

Results from the content analysis show that all six storylines and their respective themes were present in all speeches about CSFM. Their occurrences are outlined in the table and graphs below.

Table 4: Presence of Storylines in CSFM Narrative (own data)

Storyline	**Number of Appearances**	**% of Total Storylines**
Chinese wisdom and solutions can solve global governance issues	193	31%
Liberal global governance is failing	130	21%
China as a champion of multilateralism	98	15.5%
Shared fate of the world	98	15.5%

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Chinese victimization/anti-West	63	10%
Increasing Chinese presence and power in the international system	46	7%

Graph 2: Presence of Storylines in CFSM Narratives (own data)
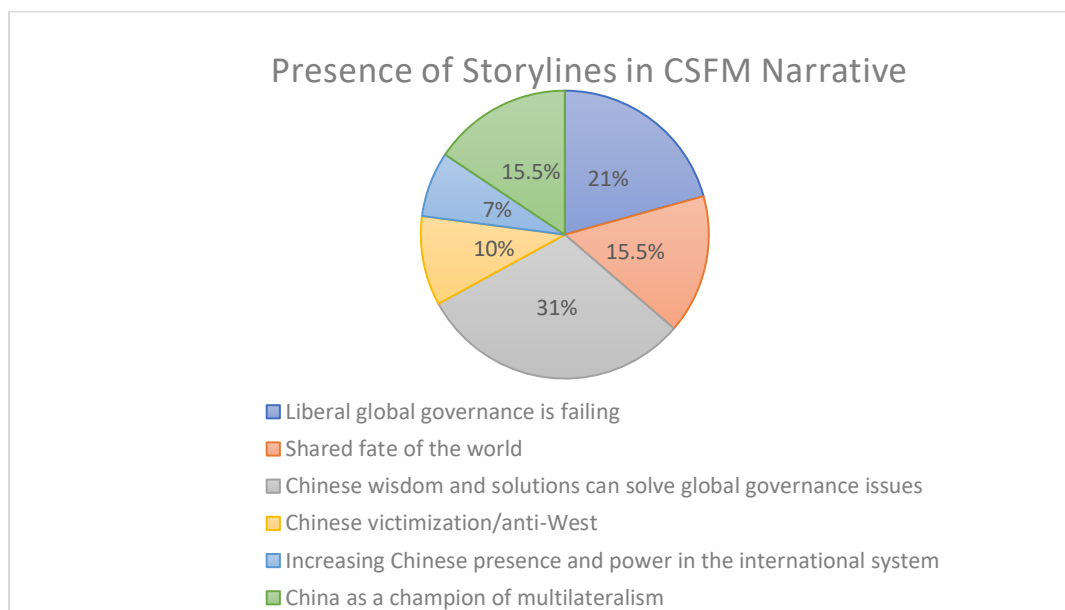
Table 5: Chinese Wisdom and Solutions can Solve Global Governance Issues Storyline (own data)

Theme	No. of Appearances
China contributes to mankind by preserving peace or development	73
New type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation	21
Chinese partnerships rather than U.S. alliances	20
Chinese perspectives and proposals are needed	18
Chinese traditions of peace and harmony	17
China wants to improve, not overturn the international system	15
Peaceful Coexistence	13

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CSFM is warmly received by the international community	9
China's phenomenal progress and development	7
Total	**193**

Table 6: Liberal Global Governance is Failing Storyline (own data)

Theme	No. of Appearances
World faces unprecedented challenges	35
Changes at the international level	27
Criticisms of Cold War mentalities and zero-sum thinking	26
World must unite to face an uncertain future	15
Global governance reform needs to be inclusive	15
Global governance reform is needed or desired	12
Total	**130**

Table 7: China as a Champion of Multilateralism Storyline (own data)

Theme	No. of Appearances
The UN at the core of the international system	20
China as a defender of developing countries	17
China wants to improve, not overturn the international system	15
The world must unite to face an uncertain future	15
Criticisms of unilateralism/bilateralism	10
Chinese participation in multilateral platforms	9
Multilateralism promotes peace/development	7
Multi-polarization is the trend of the times	5
Total	**98**

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Table 8: Shared Fate Storyline (own data)

Theme	No. of Appearances
Benefits and interests of all countries are common and intertwined	30
Shared struggles and interests between China and Asian countries	26
Shared struggles and interests between China and developing countries	24
Shared dream between China and other countries	9
Positive China-U.S. relations benefit everyone	6
Common interests between China and Europe	3
Total	**98**

Table 9: China Victimization/Anti-West Storyline (own data)

Theme	No. of Appearances
China is a fair, just and responsible power	21
Chinese partnerships rather than U.S. alliances	20
The West should not intervene in internal affairs of other countries	16
Unfounded and unfair critiques of china	6
Total	**63**

Table 10: China's International Presence and Power Storyline (own data)

Theme	No. of Appearances
Increased Chinese voice in international issues	15
Chinese participation in multilateral platforms	13
China is reshaping global norms and values to its favor	9

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China's phenomenal progress/development	7
Increased Chinese soft power	2
Total	**46**

5.2 International System Narrative of Global Interdependence

CSFM is presented as an international system narrative of global interdependence, where the core theme of changes at the international level is linked to the storyline of a shared fate of the world. The CCP identifies changes unseen in a century as the 'shifting balance of power,' (Wang 2017a) and 'multi polarization and economic globalization,' (Xi 2015a). In the face of this, the 'interests of countries have never been so closely interconnected,' (Liu 2014).

Global interdependence is framed as an inescapable outcome of monumental changes at the international level. Here, the trend of globalization (increasing networks and flows) is what interlinks the interests of all, thus creating the condition of global interdependence. This notion is established in the opening paragraphs of almost all speeches by leaders (Wang 2019; Wang 2017b; Yang 2018; Li 2017; Xi 2017b; Xi 2015a). To support this shared fate storyline, officials often refer to the theme of a shared dream. By interlinking the fates and dreams of all, the CCP establishes a sense of interdependence between countries of the world.

As a key feature of the international system, interdependence outlines how relationships are interlinked in a way that the needs and desired outcomes of one party is contingent to some degree on the behaviour of others. Interdependence allows the system as a whole to function because of the interdependence of its parts (Coate, Griffen & Elliott-Gower 2015). In this context of interdependence, Beijing stands for mutual benefit and win-win-cooperation, through the development of economic globalization for common prosperity (Yang 2014). Interdependence is framed by Chinese leaders as a condition which requires reciprocal cooperation and common benefits, to attain desired results. Beijing's emphasis on shared interests and outcomes is largely focused on that of an economic nature, rather than those of an ideological or political basis.

In dialogue with Asian and developing countries, China emphasizes shared historical struggles, which are framed according to developmental and economic interests. China and Africa have 'similar sufferings and struggle in our histories and are faced with the same tasks of development,' (Wang 2019) and 'Asian countries [after the Cold War] were finally able to focus on development

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and on exploring a path suited to their national conditions,' (Liu 2014). Through the theme of share struggles, China further pursues its effort since the 1970s to institutionalize its relations with developing countries. Cultivation of this relationship is further driven by how China views developing countries as the main force to build a more representative and equitable international order (Yang 2014).

To establish a shared fate with the U.S. and Europe, CCP leaders alter their approach by referencing contemporary economic interests rather than those which derive from developmental shared struggles. The 'economic relationship between China and the United States is, in essence, mutually beneficial, delivering many tangible benefits to people of both countries,' (Zheng 2018). 'China and Europe have continued to make fresh headway in the development of the partnership for peace, growth, reform…' (Wang 2017b). Here, Beijing's rhetoric aligns with its power diplomacy strategy of building strategic partnerships with big countries (Yang 2014). By emphasizing the shared fate of the world with reference to specific bilateral relations, historical contexts and diplomatic strategies, the CCP builds a narrative of global interdependence that is able to speak to all participants in the international system.

In this context of shared interests and fates, the CCP establishes a sense of uncertainty for the future, which equally affects all parties. 'People long for a bright future but are bewildered about what will come. What has happened to the world and how should we respond?' (Xi 2017b). Beijing builds a looming image of an unknown future, creating a sense of urgency to address destabilizing factors in the international system. In the system which 'has become more unstable, uncertain and unpredictable' (Yang 2018), Cold War mentalities and zero-sum thinking must be abandoned. Such attitudes are in conflict with processes of integration that characterize the current order. 'One must not cling to the Cold War mentality or zero-sum thinking since the times have changed' (Wang 2017c).

The call to replace zero-sum thinking is prescribed with a high degree of urgency when officials touch upon conceptualizations of how the international system is vs how it ought to be. These notions draw upon history, juxtaposing the outdated remnants of Cold War thinking with the present system of global interdependence, characterised largely by economic integration. 'Old security concepts based on the Cold War mentality, zero-sum game and worship of force are being overtaken by new trends of regional economic integration' (Liu 2014).

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Whilst speeches do not specify which actors are guilty of operating under Cold War mentalities, Beijing alludes to the U.S. as such an actor. The U.S, often regarded as the dominant power and leader of the current liberal international system, has received criticisms of zero-sum thinking by Chinese diplomats (e.g Xinhua 2019; BBC 2017). China's narrative of global interdependence asserts that 'no country has the right to monopolize international and regional security affairs,' and that 'all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community' (Yang 2018). Within the Chinese proposed system of global interdependence, equality, mutual trust and justice are core values which are described as achievable only through the rejection of zero-sum mindsets.

Characteristics such as U.S.-style alliances are criticized in the international system narrative as they are features of the bipolar Cold War system and remain a 'central pillar of the liberal international system' (CSIS 2019). Beijing opposes such alliances, instead advocating for the alternative of partnerships which:

> 'spring naturally from China's independent foreign policy of peace...transcend the Cold War mentality of either with us or against us that created confrontation between opposing alliances and present the world with a new modality for developing state-to-state relations,' (Wang 2017c).

As a hallmark of contemporary Chinese foreign policy, partnerships are noted to be more conducive to progress and collaboration in a globalized world (Wang 2017a). They are a key feature in the CCP's big power diplomacy strategy, to shift towards non-alignment with big countries in the post-Cold-War era (Yang 2014). In comparison with U.S.-style alliances, partnerships are also more preferable as they are not bounded by treaty obligations and allow for cooperation with partners despite differences in ideologies. By contrasting partnerships with the inefficient alliance system, Beijing officials put forth a vision of the global order in which the U.S. system of treaty alliances is absent (Tobin 2018). The international system narrative thus excludes long-standing features associated and put forth by the West, advocating for a system which instead features Chinese proposals.

In the context of global interdependence, the CCP highlights themes of changes, shared fates and dreams, uncertain futures and the need to abandon old Cold-War mentalities. These notions suggest the need for new global governance ideas, as a 'new era calls for a new mentality,' (Wang

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2016). The international system narrative thus functions to set the context in which new ideas and solutions are required during a time of global interdependence.

5.3 Issue Narrative of Global Governance Failure

Drawing on the narrative of global interdependence in which the world is characterized by change and uncertainties, the CCP establishes an issue narrative of global governance failure. Whilst the international system narrative alludes to problems in the global order, the issue narrative explicitly labels the issue as the failure of liberal global governance to address 'uncertainties in the economic climate…non-traditional security threats and global challenges including terrorism, cyber security, energy security, food security, climate change, and major infectious diseases,' (Xi 2015b). There thus needs to be immediate "solutions," (Wang 2017b) "reforms," (Zheng 2018) and "conclusions and answers," (Wang 2017c). The narrative of global governance failure is constructed through its own storyline, along with the themes of unprecedented challenges, the desire for international system reform and a more inclusive reform. It further employs the storyline of Chinese wisdom and solutions, drawing upon the notion that Chinese ideas such as CSFM are needed to solve global governance failure.

The narrative of global governance failure is constructed through themes of desired reform and inclusive reform. Against the backdrop of global interdependence, 'countries are eagerly looking for solutions to such questions as how to uphold the post-war international order,' Wang 2016). These questions are framed in terms of the unprecedented challenges that have been left unresolved and equally impact members of the international community. Thus, 'the goal to achieve peace and development is far from being met. We need to respond to the people's call.' (Xi 2017b).

The demand for global governance reform is framed in terms of the fundamental inequality which exists in international relations, illustrated by the lack of 'representation and say of developing countries' (Yang 2018). Thus, reforms that 'serve the interest of developing countries' (Yang 2019) are required. Chinese leaders view that its role in this context is to 'play an active part in reforming and developing the global governance system' (Zheng 2018). In recent years, China has taken such action by for example, pushing for the revision of the institutional architecture of the International Monetary Fund, resulting in a greater voice for it and other emerging economies (Kastner, Pearson & Rector 2018).

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Beijing imagines a multilateral system featuring Chinese participation as the most appropriate course of action to reform global governance. Multilateralism is conceptualized as the coordination of policies between three or more states for the purpose of certain principles and burden-sharing. It is often characterized as a post-Cold War phenomenon, an embodiment of world multi-polarization, globalization and internationalization of challenges (Niu 2011). Specifically, a multilateral system centred around the United Nations (UN) is identified as one way to address the lack of representation in IR, allowing for an order that is not determined by might but by a set of rules that apply to all (Sidiropoulous 2019).

The CCP iterates that 'we must never allow the law of the jungle to rule the world, nor should we accept the zero-sum game that puts the weak at the mercy of the strong' (Wang 2019). Such statements reflect perceptions that the rules of the current system have been skewed against poorer countries (Sidiropoulous 2019). With reference to the desires for inclusive reform, China explicitly interlinks the 'need to unequivocally uphold the UN Charter,' with the safeguarding of 'the common interests of all developing countries and emerging economies, and, for that matter, international fairness and justice' (Wang 2019).

Positioning itself as a champion for inclusive growth and peace, China asserts that multilateralism is the answer to the 'important question of where human society should go,' (Zheng 2018). Multilateralism is situated as the way to promote peace and development and discussed in terms with another theme of multipolarization. Multipolarity increases voices in IR, checking the unilateral impulses of the U.S. and generating more stability than a current order which is dominated by a single American superpower (Li 2012).

Chinese emphasis on the role of smaller, developing countries is driven by the positive influence that such countries can have on creating a multipolar structure, to counter U.S. attempts to build a unipolar world (Yang 2014). Xi asserts that 'big countries should treat smaller ones as equals instead of acting as a hegemon imposing their will on others,' (Xi 2017b). Multilateralism thus facilitates the necessary cooperation in a system of interdependence that lacks equal representation and faces challenges due to global governance failure.

Beijing presents itself as a champion for multilateralism by drawing attention to its participation in platforms such as 'multilateral human rights committees,' (Li 2017) the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank (Xi 2015b). The AIIB, with China's 30% stake, is regarded as an alternative to Western-led multilateral financial

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institutions, illustrating Chinese leadership in the reform and development of the multilateral system (Rosellini 2017). Such contributions are underscored as part of Chinese efforts to 'make the global governance system more just and equitable' (Yang 2019). In light of global interdependence and the rise of developing countries, Chinese contributions in this area provide developing countries with increased channels to address themes that they feel existing institutions are not tackling (Sidiropoulous 2019).

China strategically communicates a narrative of global governance failure by highlighting the serious challenges that the international community jointly faces. The themes of desired reform and inclusive reform refer to the failures of the current system to address challenges and changes at the international level. In this system, the ideational foundations of zero-sum thinking and unilateralism stand at discord with the current context of global interdependence. Along with ideational limitations, the CCP references the issue of unequal representation in IR, which reflects the inadequacies of the current system and drives desires for reform. Within this context, China notes the suitability of its ideas such as CSFM to address global governance failure. In a similar vein, China also champions for multilateralism to make IR more equitable and prevent the dominance of the system by one or several countries, such as the U.S.

5.4 Identity Narrative of China as a Responsible and Capable Leader

After strategically communicating a system narrative and issue narrative, Chinese officials put forth a narrative which conveys who China is and what its values are. The identity narrative establishes China as a responsible and capable world leader by highlighting the nation's contributions to peace and development, contextualizing such contributions in terms of China's increasing international power and presence. The CCP further employs themes that emphasize the value of its proposals for the international system by stressing its domestic developmental success and philosophical traditions of peace and harmony. Beijing additionally presents itself as a fair and just actor in IR, countering anti-Chinese narratives which misrepresent the nation as a hegemonic power. The identity narrative thus provides an elaborate account of how the leadership conceptualizes its identity and role in a system of global interdependence and governance failure, communicating their capability to lead at a time of uncertainty and interconnectedness.

The most coded theme in the discourse analysis was that which detailed China's contributions to the peace and development of mankind. On 73 occasions, leaders explicitly referenced China's 'significant contribution to world peace and development' (Zheng 2018). Against the backdrop of

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global interdependence and governance failure, Chinese contributions shape an image of China as a capable leader to meet rising challenges. In a similar vein, the CCP references the theme of China's phenomenal progress and development to further highlight its competence on the world stage. 'China has blazed its own path to strength and prosperity,' (Wang 2017c), growing 'from a poor and weak country to the world's second largest economy' (Xi 2017b). Here, success and progress are attributed to the uniqueness of the Chinese developmental path. This addresses critical conceptions that China should not 'follow its own path of socialism with Chinese characteristics…suited to its own conditions' (Wang 2017b).

Chinese progress is presented in terms of how Beijing's ideas 'are inspired by the fine traditions of the 5000-year Chinese culture emphasizing the pursuit of common good' (Wang 2017b). These values are described as something special that China offers to the world. As such, ideas like CSFM 'with distinct Chinese features' (Wang 2016) are received warmly by the international community. As a Chinese proposal for the reform of the international system, CSFM is framed as credible due to its foundation in wise, time-tested tradition.

Chinese propositions are presented as not only valuable for the international community, but also indicative of the nation's increasing power. China has 'a bigger voice and greater influence in the international arena' (Wang 2017c). For the CCP, this is partly due the circulation of Chinese ideas such as CSFM, which contribute to Chinese efforts to improve its soft power. 'These propositions have further enriched the core values of China's foreign policy and received wide recognition from the international community…they have become a hallmark of the soft power of socialist China' (Wang 2017c).

The emphasis on the wisdom of Chinese ideas and their increased global presence can be understood as part of CCP efforts at enhancing discursive power. Discursive power, held in conjunction with a broader ability to influence international structures, processes and institutions, can contribute to the development of soft power, crucial for China's comprehensive national power. Leaders invest in communication initiatives to shape favourable global discussions and improve understandings of China, which are often negative (d'Hooghe 2014).

The Chinese perspective also sees a dichotomy between the image of China presented by the West and the reality of China. To address this, the CSFM narrative communicates the theme of

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unfounded critiques, situating them as a product of 'anti-China forces' (Li 2017) which are 'totally groundless,' and expose a 'lack of understanding about China' (Wang 2019).

Chinese conceptualizations note that the West possesses discursive hegemony and uses it to negatively describe Chinese behaviour with labels such as neo-colonialism and authoritative capitalism (Zheng 2013). In particular, critics have been wary that China's increasing infrastructure projects in Africa, such as the Belt and Road initiative, reflect its neo-colonialist ambitions rather than development-oriented ones. When referencing Sino-African relations, officials counter such notions by asserting that 'outside forces have attempted to vilify and undermine China-Africa cooperation by fabricating the so-called neo-colonialism and debt trap' (Wang 2019).

Other themes such as the one that emphasizes how China is a fair and just power function similarly to counter negative narratives. In addressing its relationship with Africa, officials emphasize that 'China upholds the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith' (Yang 2019). China emphasizes its opposition to Western intervention, asserting that 'no interference will weaken our resolve to strengthen cooperation with Africa' (Wang 2019). The determination of Beijing leaders to increase their presence in the continent is driven by the belief that '…China's historical experience and development model resonate powerfully with African counterparts, thereby creating a comparative advantage vis-a-vis the West' (Morrison 2007).

The identity narrative also addresses fears about the implications of China's rise on the global order. Chinese interpretations of discursive power highlight that negative concepts like the 'China Threat' reflect the many 'doubts about China,' (Zhao 2016:545). In speeches, leaders explicitly stress that Chinese participation in global governance is 'not meant to overhaul the system or start a new structure, but to improve the current system' (Zheng 2018). Such definite statements reflect Beijing's attention to how it is regarded by the foreign public, who often express fears that China wishes to overturn the current order (Gilpin 1981). According to such conceptualizations, China will seek to alter the literal international system to increase its power and interests.

CCP officials rebuke these claims by asserting that China 'will firmly uphold the existing international system…[with] no intention to change or displace the United States' (Wang 2017b). The theme of China as a fair and just power is employed for this purpose, to assure observers that 'no matter how advanced it may become, China will never seek hegemony' (Yang 2018). Here,

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Beijing is a responsible stakeholder, working to sustain its position in the system that maintains its prosperity (Zoellick 2005).

China is searching for ways to expand its influence within the current system rather than directly attacking it (Ikenberry 2018; Zhang 2016). In line with this, the CCP constantly asserts that the 'global governance reform that China takes part in is not about overturning the current system and starting all over again. Instead, it is about improving the system so that it can better reflect the changing realities' (Yang 2018).

China presents itself as a responsible and capable world leader at a time of international uncertainty and change. It highlights the diverse ways in which it is working to sustain and improve the international order. Yet, it also puts forth themes that indicate desires to fundamentally change the current system. For example, speeches include notions of how Beijing 'takes initiatives to shape the new normal in our favour' (Xi 2015b) referencing 'rule-making in new areas' (Liu 2014) as a positive indicator of China's increased international presence and power.

Observers interpret Chinese reshaping of norms as indicative of efforts to overthrow the system rather than improve it. In human rights, China harnesses its influence in the UN to actively influence norms. Leaders work within the institution to establish values such as state sovereignty and the right to economic development rather than political and civil human rights (Okano-Heijmans & van der Putten 2018). CSFM is seen as a tool to achieve this, hiding '...a desire to reinforce orthodox interpretations of principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention... [and] undermine the legitimacy of international mechanisms to monitor human rights…' (Piccone 2018:7). Such accounts stand at odds with the image that China projects of itself 'the most positive factor in the evolution of the international system' (Wang 2017b).

These accounts contextualize Beijing's strong avocation for the UN in global governance Motivations are not purely rooted in the UN's 'universally recognized contribution to maintaining global peace and sustaining development,' (Xi 2017b). Rather, the UN helps China advance its interests and achieve its goal of acting as a responsible power through participation in UN affairs (Niu 2011:5).

By emphasizing China's international contributions and the phenomenal pace of its domestic development, the CCP shapes an image of China as a responsible and capable world leader. This

identity qualifies China to reform the international system. By linking the theme of Chinese wisdom and solutions with Chinese traditions of peace and harmony, the CCP projects Chinese proposals such as CSFM as viable solutions to current challenges. CSFM further allows the CCP to inject its values into global discussions, countering the discursive hegemony of the West and taking control of the story of China.

To construct the image of China as a responsible and capable leader, the identity narrative also addresses critiques of China as hegemonic and revisionist with a Chinese victimization/anti-West theme. This, and the consistent framing of Chinese proposals as valuable, underscore the increasing confidence of China on the world stage. However, certain discrepancies exist between China's projected identity vis-a-vi the CSFM narrative and actual practice. Here, CCP efforts to subvert certain global norms within multilateral institutions calls into question the legitimacy and value of CSFM as a solution to global governance failure.

5.5 Narratives in Dialogue

China's international system narrative of global interdependence relies on the shared fate storyline to describe how the world is changing as the futures and interests of all become increasingly intertwined. Changes arising from power shifts and globalization generate uncertainties, thus calling for international cooperation and new ideas for global governance. Whilst the international system narrative emphasizes a context of change, the issue narrative provides more detail by stating that the cause behind an uncertain and unstable future is the failure of the current liberal global governance system. The storyline of global governance failure also draws upon the system narrative of global interdependence to further stress how unprecedented and unresolved challenges affect all participants in the international system. With such high stakes, immediate solutions are required to tackle the inadequacies of liberal global governance. In this instance, the storyline of Chinese wisdoms and solutions is put forth to highlight how China possesses the answers to problems of peace and development which global governance has failed to resolve. The narratives of global interdependence and governance failure thus work together to create a sense of demand for solutions, with the identity narrative functioning to present China as the source for such solutions. Storylines of Chinese victimization/anti-West, increasing Chinese power and presence, and Chinese championing for multilateralism characterize China as the most capable actor to lead in a system which is interdependent and suffering from global governance failure.

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6. Conclusion

This paper provided an in-depth examination of the CSFM vision and contextualized it according to Chinese thinking on the world order and its role within it. A narrative approach decoded CSFM to identify six prominent storylines with corresponding themes, all of which helped build an international system narrative of global interdependence, an issue narrative of global governance failure, and an identity narrative of China as a responsible and capable leader. To communicate such narratives, the CCP incorporated and framed a range of contextual, historical, cultural, political and theoretical concepts. Together, these concepts constitute a narrative that presents China as a leader in an interconnected global order that is failing to address unprecedented challenges.

As the focus of this research was on narrative construction, more diversified research approaches could increase understanding of how CSFM is received and the extent to which it truly reflects Beijing's conceptions of the global order. Since this research also relied exclusively on CCP speeches to decode CSFM and its underpinning ideas, its approach constitutes as a state-centred one. In the current international context characterized by a new media ecology, non-state actors have increasing influence in narrative formulation and reception, shaping a need to trace how narratives are presented across different outlets (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2017). Whilst the role of non-state actors may not be large due to the CCPs control over publishing, other studies could investigate into factors such as narrative reception, for example, through the study of Chinese netizen blogs. Future studies are likely to benefit from a perspective that recognizes how narratives can be constructed or received by different actors and channels.

Despite some shortcomings, the narrative approach in this research decoded CSFM to offer a window into the CCP's thinking about the world order and its role within it. Examining how Chinese slogans are built can generate insight into the image that Beijing seeks to project to foreign audiences. Further attention to concepts such as CSFM may also inform international observers about the impacts of China's newfound influence on the global order, better preparing them to engage with Chinese thinking.

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