

COMMUNITY OF SHARED FUTURE FOR HUMANITY: A DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY?

COMUNIDAD DE FUTURO COMPARTIDO PARA LA HUMANIDAD ¿UNA COMUNIDAD EMOCIONAL EN DESARROLLO?

COMUNIDADE COM FUTURO COMPARTILHADO PARA A HUMANIDADE: UMA COMUNIDADE EMOCIONAL EM DESENVOLVIMENTO?

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Abstract

China's growth in recent decades and its relationship with the liberal world order led by the United States –of which China questions some of its main characteristics– has put the country at the center of international debate. Three visions of the role of China in this relationship are discussed: a) China adapts to this order due to its involvement in the international society and its participation in international organizations; b) China modifies and adjusts to it through the same organizations or by the creation of new ones; or c) China clashes with the organizations and a new order is constructed. This paper departs from this discussion by analyzing the relation between China and the international liberal order by deconstructing China's strategic narrative of a "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" (CSFM) to evidence the emotional components that underpin it. This paper shows how China uses emotions to stress certain principles and visions.

Keywords: China; International Liberal Order; Emotions; Community of Shared Future for Mankind; narrative.

Resumen

El crecimiento de China en las últimas décadas y su relación con el orden mundial liberal liderado por Estados Unidos –del que China cuestiona algunas de sus principales características– ha puesto al país en el centro del debate internacional. Tres visiones del papel de China en esta relación son puestas a discusión: a) China se adapta a este orden debido a su

involucramiento en la sociedad internacional y participación en organismos internacionales; b) China modifica y ajusta el orden a través de las mismas organizaciones o mediante la creación de otras nuevas; o c) hay un choque entre China y las organizaciones y un nuevo orden es construido. Este documento parte de esta discusión al analizar la relación entre China y el orden liberal internacional mediante la deconstrucción de la narrativa estratégica de China de una “Comunidad de Futuro Compartido para la Humanidad” (CFCH) para evidenciar los componentes emocionales que la sustentan. Este documento muestra cómo China usa las emociones para enfatizar ciertos principios y visiones.

Palabras clave: China; Orden Liberal Internacional; Emociones; Comunidad de Futuro Compartido para la Humanidad; narrativa.

Resumo

O crescimento da China nas últimas décadas e sua relação com a ordem mundial liberal liderada pelos Estados Unidos — sobre a qual a China questiona algumas de suas principais características — vem colocando o país no centro do debate internacional. Três visões do papel da China nessa relação são discutidas: 1) a China se adapta a essa ordem devido ao seu envolvimento na sociedade internacional e participação em organizações internacionais; 2) a China modifica e ajusta a ordem por meio das mesmas organizações ou mediante a criação de outras; 3) há um choque entre a China e as organizações, e uma nova ordem é constituída. Este documento parte dessa discussão ao analisar a relação entre a China e a ordem liberal internacional mediante a desconstrução da narrativa estratégica da China de uma “comunidade com futuro compartilhado para a humanidade” para evidenciar os componentes emocionais que a apoiam. Além disso, mostra como esse país usa as emoções para enfatizar certos princípios e visões.

Palavras-chave: China; ordem liberal internacional; emoções; comunidade com futuro compartilhado para a humanidade; narrativa.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War was followed by what Krauthammer (1990) defined as a “unipolar moment”. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the liberal international order expanded and consolidated, making democracy and capitalism the proper recognized and legitimate political and economic systems. This order was sustained by the hegemonic leadership of the United States and became institutionalized in a wide range of practices and organizations. Even though it was thought to be a long-standing order, 30 years later the scenario does not stand as strongly.

The international tensions that increased with the arrival of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States were accompanied, not surprisingly, with narratives of a new Cold War based on a bipolar distribution of power. The growth of China in the last decades, materially visible in a changing distribution of power, started contending the leadership of the United States and has sparked a debate about its role and impact in the international society and in the international liberal order. Studies have also flourished attempting to find explanations from many different theoretical approaches: realists, liberals, and constructivists have argued about the role of international organizations, ideas and identities, the material

capacities, and the interdependence to deal with China's new flourishing. Such is the landscape commonly portrayed in International Relations journals and books.

This article finds its departure point in the debates surrounding China's raise, its commitment and satisfaction with the current international order, and the possibilities it has of pushing its limits to generate changes. While the views in the literature regarding these issues vary, with pessimist and optimist opinions (Ciwan & Chan, 2020), a common agreement can be identified: "changes will happen" (Lee, Heritage, & Mao, 2020). The question of how the Asian country will work through those changes, however, remains a contested sphere in the academic community. This paper aims to contribute to this discussion from the recent and growing emotional approach from International Relations by highlighting the emotional component of China's global strategy included in the "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" narrative (CSFM), and its importance for nourishing changes in the international system.

According to Zhao (2018), the first mention of this narrative can be traced back to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012 and, since then, it has been continuously mentioned internationally. It was first conceptualized by Xi Jinping in a speech delivered at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. Relevant milestones of such narrative include the "Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind" speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, the "Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind" speech in 2017 also at the United Nations, the 19th Congress report of the CPC, and several mentions during National Days and New Year (Zhao, 2018). The concept was included in the CPC's Constitution in 2017 as well and was published within official books. Subsequently, the "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" started to be included in United Nation's resolutions.

The question that motivated this research, then, is: what is the emotional content of the "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" and how it helps the consolidation of a community? In order to provide an answer, the article is organized in five sections. The first presents a brief literature review about the interactions between China and the international society focused on how it is pursuing a modification to the current world order. The second provides the theoretical background that underpins this study, highlighting the increasing relevance of the emotional turn within the field of international Relations, the methodological challenges, and the possible contributions to the field. The third section proceeds with the deconstruction of China's strategic narrative, exploring the "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" structure in official Chinese international speeches. The fourth section explores the emotions that underpin the narrative with its associated effects. And finally, the last section reviews the insights and contributions of the examination, serving as a base for future debates.

It's Not You, It's Me. Or Is It You?

Buzan stated that the relations between China and the international society have been anything but simple. Forced by the invasion of the European powers and Japan in the XIX century, China had a first violent involvement with the European international society that was expanding throughout the world and establishing its values and ideas of order. A hierarchical-cultural tributary system encountered a Westphalian order in which sovereignty, nation-state,

and anarchy primed. A civilizational empire, invaded and dismantled, had to adjust and transform into a successful nation-state that could stand by itself in an international society. Such traumatic experience –known in China as “hundred years of humiliation”– ended with the triumph of the Communist Party in 1949 and has since then influenced the engagement of China with the international society (Buzan & Lawson, 2020).

China remained partially closed and with little international involvement in the aftermath of the revolution. However, Chinese interactions with the world sparked after the Reform and Opening Up fostered by Deng Xiaoping. China’s progressive participation and economic growth were accompanied with hopes that this decision would signify a transition towards democracy and a market driven economy, adjusting to liberal norms and values of the order. Nevertheless, the western order led by the United States faced great disappointment as the Chinese political system remained in place along with its mixed economic system. The question, then, bloomed: how does this new powerful China engage with the international society?

There is a consensus between scholars surrounding the tensions between the liberal US-led order and China. These conflicts are usually subsumed in the clash between the adoption and application of liberal universal values, such as human rights and democracy, in contraposition with the strong sovereign claims in which each country gets to decide its own model depending on its socio-historic-economic conditions. The question whether China will withstand this order, adapt to it, or will try to change it, and how, is worth exploring (Breslin, 2010; Ikenberry, Wang, & Feng, 2015, Swaine, 2016).

A first group of realist authors emphasize the novel distribution of power associated with China’s rise. From their perspectives, China’s material capabilities evidence the structural problems of the liberal order and reinforce the possibility of contesting them risking even a possible armed conflict. Those are the means that China uses to push changes in the world order and to create a sphere of influence in East and Southeast Asia. It is there where China can impulse its own ideas of world order. The result, these authors conclude, tends to be some form of bipolarity that ends up with the liberal order being in crisis (Mearsheimer, 2014, 2019; Moore, 2017; Allison, 2017; Layne, 2018; Walt, 2019; Colby & Mitchell, 2020).

Institutionalist and international political economy authors form a second relevant cluster, whose ideas focus on China’s membership and interaction with international organizations. They state that those organizations have the possibility of modeling and affecting China’s behavior, the internationalization of its economic actors, and its economic interdependence. China’s possibilities of changing the world order depend directly on its involvement in international organizations as it is through them that China will be able to reinforce its own ideas and norms and, at the same time, create new institutions to reshape agendas (Chin & Thakur, 2010; Schweller & Pu, 2011; Heilmann, Rudolf, Huotari, & Buckow, 2014; Wang, & Feng, 2015; Ikenberry J. G., 2014; Dai & Renn, 2016; Chen, 2016; Feng & He, 2017; Foot, 2018; Can & D., 2020; Ciwan & Chan, 2020).

Constructivist authors and those from the English School go beyond the material capabilities highlighted by the two aforementioned trends. They stress the importance of the role played by non-formal institutions, values, ideas, and identities in the international society.

From this view, authors highlight the ways in which institutions are socially constructed, how knowledge is distributed, and the identities and ideas that lie behind China's actions aimed at creating changes in the international system. Moreover, the construction of China as a responsible world power and its legitimation is another common topic (Breslin, 2010; Wei & Fu, 2011; Clark, 2014; Loke, 2015; Zhang, 2016; Yan, 2018; Allan, Vucetic, & Hopf, 2018; Weinhardt & Brink, 2019).

It is from within this last group of scholars that explorations about the concept of "Community of Shared Future for Mankind" have flourished, with three distinctive approaches.

The first scholarly group engages in the deconstruction of the CSFM strategic narratives and its impact/influence. Firstly, Yang (2020) emphasizes on how the CSFM narrative helps to establish China as a leader who is willing to improve the current world order, an argument also highlighted by Can & Chan (2020). In agreement with this vision, Li (2019) contrasts the Chinese and US narratives, stressing how they impact the shaping of identities, roles, and foreign policies. Adding to the international image of a China integrated into the world, Zhang (2018) underlines as a motivation the need to ease tensions in the South China Sea while Wong (2018) reinforces how the CSFM translates into the economic, institutional, and cultural diplomacy. Tobin (2018) argues that it implies a direct challenge for the US-led world order while Rolland (2020) highlights a search for partial hegemony over the South. Finally, Lee (2016) explores the relation between the narrative and the acquisition and enhancement of soft power.

A second academic group has concentrated on the implications of the narrative in a specific geographic area or topic. Xu & Guo (2016) analyze the CSFM regarding different regions and countries, showing its consequences in political and military cooperation. Liu (2015) concentrates on Asia to explore the CSFM as a narrative intended to build an Asian order. A similar approach can be highlighted in Ding & Cheng (2017), who explore the way in which the narrative helps Middle Eastern's governance. Similarly, Zeng (2016) and Liang & Zheng (2019) visualize the engagement of the narrative with the Belt and Road Initiative highlighting its impact on the development of a regional community while Ba (2019) assesses it in relation to Singapore. Weissmann (2019) embraces discourse analysis by contrasting US and China's narratives in the South China Sea. Finally, Zhang & Orbie (2019) and Kopra (2016) demonstrate how the narrative influences climate change governance while Li & Chen (2019) examine how it interplays in environmental law.

The third group focuses on the content of the CSFM. Liu & Zhang (2018) analyze the "community" component of the narrative in contraposition to an order based on a nation-state, a similar approach such as the one followed by Sang (2019) to show that the narrative represents the idea of a "world order", and Zhao (2018), who includes the assessment of the international landscape. Lams (2018) contrasts Xi Jinping's narrative and discursive schemes with previous leaders' doctrines, showing continuities and discrepancies. Yan & Hua (2020) and Ye (2019) analyze Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy based on traditional Chinese philosophy and Marxist perspectives while Zeng (2020) offers a perspective on the evolution and uses of the CSFM slogan showing how it is progressively acquiring meaning. Finally, Chinese literature emphasizes on its significance for the international society by exploring its different nuances. In general, these texts tend to provide some content to the narrative without

any critical analysis of it (Yang Z. , 2017; Sun, 2017; Zhang, 2017; Yang, 2019; Marcelli, 2019; Song & Ning, 2019; Liu, 2019; Li J. , 2019; Liu R. , 2019; Xing, 2020).

There is a great number of studies involved in the examination of CSFM. However, from a broad perspective, and more particularly from its narrative and emotional component and about the way in which CSFM can influence the relations between China and the international society, the topic still remains underdeveloped.

How Does It Feel?

The school of Social Psychology provides the necessary background for the study of emotions in social science. Following Bar-Tal, this approach centers the analysis in the shared beliefs of a society “as an integral part of group membership. Individuals, as members of different groups, hold shared beliefs in their cognitive repertoire” (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 6). According to this school, the intersubjective knowledge and shared values and beliefs influence the behavioral conduct of groups and societies.

The emotional component stands out as an essential dimension of this theory, highlighting its influence on the decisions and actions of human beings. Largely ignored or denied within social sciences, emotions have started to be considered a critical aspect of political processes (Crawford, 2000; Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008) and even an “Emotional turn” was formulated (Lemmings & Brooks, 2014). “The study of emotions and affects as critical elements of discourse and language are flourishing in the International Relations literature” in fields other than sociology and political science (Skonieczny, 2018, p. 63). What emotions are, how they can be studied, what is their impact and how they influence social processes are some of the questions raised by the scholars.

Besides acknowledging the relevance of studying emotions, Koschut (2020) stresses that the emotional approach is currently “using emotions as a category of analysis in studying real-world events” (Koschut, 2020, p.72). Despite the wide range of examinations on how emotions can affect international relations, certain assumptions and ontological aspects of their study is shared by critical emotion research: Firstly, that they are culturally appraised, socially constructed and linked to social structures. Secondly, and closely related, emotions are learned through the socialization process rather than being innate. Finally, emotions have a prescriptive and purposive component, reinforcing what is allowed and socially acceptable and what is not (Koschut, 2020).

Beyond conceptualizing emotions, a great challenge that arises when approaching this perspective is how to study them (Koschut, 2020). On one hand, emotions are subjectively perceived and ephemeral, which makes them difficult to access scientifically (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008). On the other one, there is an ongoing discussion on whether collective actors like communities, states, or international organizations can actually *feel*. In this regard, Koschut underlines that “Critical emotion research employs a social ontology that emphasizes the importance of the intersubjective and sociocultural character of emotions without necessarily denying their phenomenological expression in the sense of physically perceived feelings” (Koschut, 2020, p. 73).

Critical discourse analysis is presented within qualitative research as the best methodological tool to understand the problems of accessing emotions and their intersubjectivity, as well as comprehend their usefulness to deconstruct narratives and their emotional component (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Critical discourse analysis “helps us overcome a specific methodological problem: the issue of emotion’s low visibility or rather non-conscious emotions” (Kleres, 2010, pp. 197-198). As Koschut states, “textual and verbal utterances provide us with a promising way to make emotions empirically accessible for researchers” (Koschut, 2017, p. 5). Critical discourse analysis makes it possible to move beyond the internal phenomenological perception by exploring their representation in language.

When approaching this methodology, a second issue arises. It is related to the criteria that needs to be followed. Critical discourse analysis applied to emotions implies a dual step (Koschut, 2018). Firstly, the appropriate texts to be analyzed need to be identified, those may be political speeches, inscriptions, books, etc. Once those objects have been collected, the micro and macro strategies applicable to read the texts should be defined, identifying the particular words or expressions in a broader structure that gives them meaning (Katz, 1999; Kleres, 2010). It is important to keep in mind that some words might directly describe an emotion, such as “proud”, while others might express it, as in “we won with our effort”. Finally, the text is used to answer the “so what” question as Koschut defines it, or what “the emotion potential of texts essentially helps us explain or understand” (Koschut, 2018, p. 280). In this sense, the identification of the emotional content needs a further step, providing insights into why the narrative tries to generate this emotion.

The diversity of studies within the increasing sphere of emotions in International Relations also highlight the relevance of affective/emotional communities. This concept refers to groups in which members adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and forms of feelings, reinforcing their sense of belonging. Emotions help to underpin communities thus facilitating the development and maintenance of the relations of the members (Rosenwein, 2006; Hutchison, 2016; Koschut, 2014).

In the following sections, the narrative of the “Community of Shared Future for Mankind” will be analyzed through critical discourse analysis to evidence first its meta-narrative and micro-strategies, and then its emotional content and its implications for the interactions between China and the international society.

Deconstructing The Community of Shared Future for Mankind

The first international mention of the “Community of Shared Future for Mankind” occurred in 2013 during the visit of Xi Jinping to the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. The reference, however, is rather short without a proper elaboration of the concept: “Mankind, by living in the same global village within the same time and space where history and reality meet, have increasingly emerged as a community of common destiny in which everyone has in himself a little bit of others” (Xi, *Follow the Trend of the Times and Promote Peace and Development in the World*, 2013). The first approach referred to a human level rather than a state one. The elaboration as an extensive and complete narrative became internationally visible in Xi’s speeches at the United Nations in 2015, “Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future

for Mankind”, and in Geneva in 2017, “Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind”. It has been mentioned in almost all international speeches afterwards.

The construction of the narrative in both speeches reflects an identical structure that can be divided in three big sections. Firstly, an obscure past is described in which the World Wars occupied a central space: “mankind has gone through bloody hot wars and the chilling Cold War” (Xi, 2017). This stage is presented as “a dark page in the annals of human history” (Xi, 2015), a moment that evokes emotions of sadness, disgust and primarily fear, to which the international community should not return.

The end of this period, and the beginning of a new chapter, is signaled by the creation of the United Nations and the international institutional infrastructure that followed. The present moment, then, is characterized by the hope of working together to prevent another general war. As stated by Xi: “This universal and most representative and authoritative international organization has carried mankind’s hope for a new future and ushered in a new era of cooperation” (Xi, 2015). The principles defined by the organization have ensured the functioning of the international community for a long period of time, opening an era of hope and satisfaction.

However, the correct functioning of that institutional architecture of global governance is at a decisive instant: decisions need to be made about how to continue on this path. Such situation generates anxiety over what will possibly come. In this sense, Xi offers an outlet: “Peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom are common values of all mankind and the lofty goals of the United Nations. Yet these goals are far from being achieved, and we must continue our endeavor to meet them” (Xi, 2015). Such objectives are again mentioned in the speech at Geneva in 2017: “However, the goal to achieve peace and development is far from being met” (Xi, 2017). Furthermore, he says that “today’s world is full of uncertainties and that people long for a bright future but are bewildered about what will come”. (Xi, 2017).

Following the Chinese strategic narrative, a third and future stage can be identified, a period in which the “Community of Shared Future for Mankind” will crystalize to prevent a return to the first, dark, obscure period: “The sunshine of peace, development and progress will be powerful enough to penetrate the clouds of war, poverty and backwardness” (Xi, 2015). As “all countries are interdependent and share a common future” the Chinese proposal presents itself as the solution, as the path to follow to successfully ensure the proper development of the international society: “We need to respond to the people’s call, take up the baton of history and forge ahead on the marathon track towards peace and development” (Xi, 2017). It is from here that China constructs the accepted values and actions to belong to this community, underpinned by the emotional content.

Within the critical discourse analysis, Mayer (2014) identifies four prototypes in which the majority of narratives can be categorized in: 1) the fall: the plot starts in a good place and reaches a bad ending; 2) dust to dust: an initial negative state of a situation is improved only to fall again; 3) genesis to exodus: a negative initial moment is followed by a continuous uprising; 4) resurrection: a positive initial state is disrupted by an event that causes a fall until a new movement upwards is unveiled. The Community of Shared Future for Mankind fits the third

type perfectly, a terrible beginning develops into a good situation. However, rather than falling again, at this crucial moment the narrative reaches a breaking point in which international society needs to decide whether to return to that previous awful state or continue its progress forward.

The meta-narrative then continues with the description of the principles and behaviors that should be followed by members of the community to ensure a “fair and equitable international order in the goal mankind has always striven for” (Xi, 2017) and “avoid repeating past calamity” (Xi, 2015). It is necessary to refer directly to the traumatic initial experience explained above to recognize those principles; complying with them determines who is part of the community and who is not. In the narrative the most relevant principle for the community, and the one that crashes the most with the liberal order, is sovereignty. It is followed by peace, justice, harmony, green development, openness and inclusiveness. The accepted and condemned behaviors related to the principles are: Dialogue and mutual consultation, multilateralism, win-win cooperation, peaceful solutions of problems, low-carbon economy, no-interference in internal affairs and respect for international law.

Certain rhetorical strategies are used to reinforce the meaning of these accepted behaviors. Firstly, using antithesis and antonyms. By constantly contrasting countries, the notion that equality should be upheld is strengthened: “sovereignty and dignity of all countries, whether big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, must be respected” (Xi, 2017), “the big, the strong and rich should not bully the small, weak and poor” (Xi, 2015), “big countries should treat small countries as equals” (Xi, 2015). This strategy emphasizes on the recognized values, it draws attention to the way in which the strong and the weak should relate to one another and rejects the behaviors that go against the principles of the community. The use of these antitheses throughout the text reinforces the prescriptive aspect of ideals and principles (what’s good or what should be), since they end up defining what is bad or unwanted, through an unpretentious language loaded with emotions.

A second common device used in the narrative are idioms, proverbs, and adages to convey simple, easy-to-remember messages. These are usually associated with ancient philosophers to add a sacred aura to the narrative and an idea of long-term acceptance. For example, “As an ancient Chinese adage goes, ‘the greatest ideal is to create a world truly shared by all’” (Xi, 2015), “as an ancient Chinese philosopher said, ‘law is the very foundation of governance’” (Xi, 2017), “the ocean is vast because it admits all rivers” (Xi, 2017), “as a saying goes, ‘united we stand, divided we fall’” (Xi, 2017) or “as Confucius said, ‘do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you’” (Xi, 2017). Although it is still a topic under research, studies have shown positive relations between idioms and the transmission of emotions (Citron, Cacciari, Beck, Conrad, & Jacobs, 2016). It is worth noticing that idioms are an inherent part of Chinese language and commonly used in everyday talks.

Similarly, the studied speeches usually refer to famous phrases produced by authors associated with the institution or the country where they are delivered, in an attempt to connect emotionally with the audience and convey the messages. When delivering the speech in Russia, Xi mentioned: “Chernyshevsky once wrote, ‘the path of history is not paved like Nevsky Prospekt; it runs across fields, either dusty or muddy, and cuts across swamps or forests thickets’” (Xi, 2013). In Geneva, he stated as well: “There is a motto inscribed in the dome of

the Federal Palace of Switzerland which says ‘Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno’ (One for all and all for one)” and “the Swiss writer and Nobel laureate Hermann Hesse stressed the importance of serving ‘not war and destruction but peace and reconciliation’ (Xi, 2017).

Metaphors are another rhetorical figure directly linked with the emotional component used in the construction of the CSFM narrative. On one hand, they are used to reinforce expected behaviors. For instance, “we should build an open and inclusive world through exchanges and mutual learning. Delicious soup is made by combining different ingredients” and “clean waters and green mountains are as good as mountains of gold and silver” (Xi, 2017). On the other hand, they are included to highlight condemnable actions: “Those who adopt the high-handed approach of using force will find that they are only lifting a rock to drop on their own feet” (Xi, 2015) or “no country should open the Pandora’s box by willfully waging wars or undermining the international rule of law” (Xi, 2017). Easy, simple, and understandable phrases convey emotions in a similar way as stories do (Thorndyke, 1977; Bruner, 1990).

A final aspect of the narrative that is worth mentioning is the constant use of “We should” followed by an elucidation of the accepted and not accepted behaviors. The use of “we” promotes the feeling of belonging to the community, while the presence of “should” adds an imperative aimed at adopting specific behaviors. Regarding the accepted ones, “we should” is accompanied by engaging and encouraging verb phrases: “build partnerships”, “adopt a new vision”, “create a security architecture”, “promote open, innovative and inclusive development”, “increase inter-civilization exchanges”, “respect all civilizations”, “firmly pursue green, low-carbon, circular and sustainable development”, “step up support and assistance”, “seize the historic opportunity”. This structure, supported by the emotional content, facilitates the definition and identification of those behaviors considered to be aligned with the community and those that need to be rectified (Xi, 2015, 2017).

This original Chinese formulation has progressively expanded into international discourses and has continued to socialize the principles and behaviors related to the construction of an affective community. The CSFM has been mentioned in many Chinese speeches after bilateral meetings and Mika-Matti (2020) noticed its increasing inclusion in United Nations resolutions. It went from brief mentions in 2013 to a greater media presence after the formulation of the analyzed speeches. In this regard, between the 68th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2013 and the 73rd session in 2018, the appearance of references related to the CSFM in China-sponsored resolutions added up to 80, meaning a 23% of the resolutions.

The construction of the CSFM narrative can be understood in two different levels. The meta-narrative recurs to three moments to draw the crossroad in which the community is at: first, the traumatic experiences of World Wars and the Cold War, then a prosperous development after them, and then a current reality in which countries might return to the past unless they decide to pursue the community of a shared future. This meta-narrative is later followed by specified accepted and not accepted behaviors. Using narrative strategies that appeal to the emotions of the audience –oxymorons, contradictions, idioms, metaphors, and specific verbs— China has structured an idea of a community with acceptable and rejectable behaviors. Belonging to this community implies a set of emotions that relate positively to the

former while negative feelings are assigned to the latter. As mentioned previously, the emotional component helps underpin the narrative of the community.

Which Are the Emotions Underpinning the Narrative?

Deconstructing the CSFM narrative, in its meta-narrative and specific rhetorical devices, led our research to the next step: exploring the emotions that underpin it. Our argumentation is directly related to Hutchison's exploration of traumas and affective communities (2016). The author points out that "wars are fought and the ensuing emotional, traumatic memories help to constitute and divide societies and nations for centuries" (Hutchison, 2016:1). Not surprisingly, the Chinese narrative evokes the World Wars as a present-past that can be repeated if the CSFM does not consolidate, hence bringing back that traumatic experience. The emotional component of that perspective brings together the members of the community, strengthens their relationships, and generates cohesion. As Hutchinson describes it: "the respective community is welded together, at least temporarily, by shared emotional understandings of tragedy" (Hutchison, 2016:4)¹.

Representing that trauma becomes essential: it has to be shared and its meaning enforced, so that it can be used to socialize emotions. Discourse, here, turns into one useful tool to mediatize suffering, giving sense to the traumatic experience, expanding it, and making it meaningful for the community. A sense of collective or shared identity "can be created from telling trauma stories [...] it can create an affinity from which a sense of 'we' emerges" (Hutchison, 2016:60). Therefore, the representation of traumatic events occupies a central role within the construction of narratives.

The construction of an affective/emotional community founded on a past traumatic experience can be further underpinned by emotions. Following Koschut (2017, 2020), emotions play an essential role since they are useful to recognize other members of the community vis-à-vis non-members and their behavior. They can be understood as "feeling structures" that define who belong to the community and facilitate their identification as "emotions not only designate significance to certain norms, but, in case of a deviation from the norm, they also serve as an indicator of how bad the violation actually is" (Koschut, 2017:0). It is through the establishment of appropriate and accepted emotional responses to certain values that the community reinforces which are the accepted ones and which ones should be condemned.

In spite of the great variety of emotions that could be identified, two seem prominent: fear and hope. The meta-narrative examined above shows an interplay between an uncertain present that could transform into a terrible past-like future, characterized by a feeling of fear, or an inclusive future signed by hope. The *fear* of returning to the previous state of World Wars and the Cold War contrasts with the *hope* that comes with establishing a better future, materialized in the formation of a community. The narrative aims to construct a community based on establishing acceptable and non-acceptable practices and the interaction of these emotions.

¹ For an extensive discussion on the nature of trauma and its political processes please refer to Hutchison, *Affective Communities in World Politics*, 2016.

The fear associated to the first scenario is based on a return of the traumatic experiences from the 20th century and is characterized by competition and war between the great powers. This emotion has been one of the most researched in International Relations and is explicitly or implicitly at the core of mainstream's theories. Fear is considered an automatic emotion that surges when a perceived threat is faced (Bar-Tal, 2001) and it usually prompts face-or-flight responses (McDermott, 2004) that are biological and chemical. Despite the fact that fear is individually experienced, this article understands it as intersubjective and dependent on social and cultural contexts. As discussed previously, emotions are socially constructed, and their institutionalization can affect the community's processes. As Crawford affirms: "emotions and beliefs structure the organization of knowledge (e.g., intelligence gathering and threat assessment) and the development of standard operating procedures and routines for handling challenges. Emotions are recognized, reframed and shaped within institutions in the same way as beliefs" (Crawford, 2014, p. 547).

Conflicts are a good example of the institutionalization of fear (Bar-Tal, 2001; Crawford, 2014; Bajgerova, 2017). Military doctrines and political narratives appropriate fear to foster political interests and instigate conflict, so that members of a collective are forced to adopt a position in face of the "Other" and the world. The instigation of an armed conflict is also accompanied by the consolidation of a community against those actors or conditions that generate the fear (Campbell, 1998). That is why it is essential: "Fear changes what we look for, what we see, and the way we think. Fearful experiences or memories may prompt individuals to focus on potential future threat" (Crawford, 2014, p. 540). In this sense, the CSFM narrative is partially constructed on the horror produced by the threat of a return to the traumatic past.

Hutchison identifies the location of fear at the core of affective communities born from traumatic events: "Trauma is largely considered an encounter so confronting that it defies comprehension and manifests an unparalleled sense of dread and fear" (Hutchison, 2016, p. 70). Memorializing and socializing trauma, as intended by the CSFM narrative, brings the victims and the community together, and reinforces the bonds that hold them together. Furthermore, fear, does not only relate with the immediate emotion but also with anticipating future evils. In this case, the return of the World Wars and Cold War's period. In the words of Little, "it takes the existence of fear and the possibility of harm to drive forward political initiatives that lead to forms of accommodation and mutual agreement" (Little, 2017, p. 204).

The articulation of fear in the CSFM narrative is not necessarily represented by an "Other" in terms of a state or a group of states. Fear is associated with a situation that implies a flashback to the worst moments of the 20th century. However, the existence of a possible "Other" is also present in the narrative and it is associated with the "feeling structure" that allows the identification of those actors that push for the return. These "Others" are not frightening by themselves or the cause of fear but rather the agents that can and are willing to return to the fearful state. The narrative, at this point, presents itself as inclusive and open because it is not constructed against the "Other" as all the states are welcomed to participate as long as they follow the prescribed actions.

Hope is not an emotion that has received as much attention, but it plays a vital role in this narrative as a counterpart of fear. Both emotions are intertwined, and they reinforce each

other. As Little states it, “fear alone does not necessarily provide sufficient impetus unless there is some kind of promise of a better outcome” (Little, 2017, p. 205). The fear that the narrative tends to generate is “not generally experienced as paralyzing, [...] but a trigger” (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017, p. 6) and needs to be compensated by the hope of a better scenario to come. As fear comes from the negative future, the emotion can help identify courses of actions to avoid it. As expressed by Moisi, “fear can also be at the origins of hope. The fear of a new war between France and Germany after World War II was a decisive factor in the creation of the European Union” (Moisi, 2010, p. 92).

Averill, Catlin & Chon (1990) in an extensive study regarding hope found that it unavoidably involves uncertainty about the future and identified its three principles: First, objects of hope should not be unrealistic or too improbable; second, objects of hope should be relevant and not trivial; and third, hope should be related with socially acceptable scenarios and reflect moral values. (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990, p. 14). The CSFM narrative reflects these features, and they serve to reinforce the likelihood of establishing the community by evidencing that China has been acting according to them, stressing the importance of not returning to a state of wars and emphasizing its moral values.

Moreover, the object of the emotion of hope, in this case the construction of a new international community with different principles, is aligned with the findings of the authors. The object reflects the state’s essential interests, it is possible to achieve, and involves a degree of control (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990, p. 18). A relevant aspect of hope arises around climate change activism, as researched by Kleres and Wettergren (2017), which is the capacity it offers to work collectively towards a desired future. This dimension becomes clear in the “feeling structure” shown above, in which expected behaviors are further elucidated. Hope is “fueled by the emotional experience of acting collectively in a self-perpetuating spiral” (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017, p. 7). Knowing that the creation of the community of shared future lays in the hands of the members reinforces the feeling of both fear and hope, allowing the possibility of re-imagining the future. The use of “we” and “should”, then, are relevant to this point.

Fear and hope work together to underpin the narrative. In the case of climate change, “fear is embraced ‘internally’ by activist as an action motivator, while action generates hope (and vice versa)” (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017, p. 7). Regarding the CSFM, the fear of returning to the worst aspects of the 20th century merges with the hope of constructing a better alternative. Both emotions then push the international community forward –fostered by China and supported by behaviors that are aligned with the CSFM– to try to convince the audience of the benefits of building a community with a shared future.

The construction of the CSFM narrative cannot be understood without the emotional component that strengthens it. The meta-narrative uses the traumatic World Wars to build an affective community, drawing a global crossroads scenario in which countries are forced to decide whether they want to return to a dark stage of wars or conform to a new community, playing between fear and hope. This meta-narrative is later followed by the specification of the accepted and not accepted behaviors, underpinned by those emotions.

Conclusion

Koschut, within his emotional analysis of the democratic peace as a community, states:

It is, to a large part, through the appraisal and expression of socially appropriate emotions that liberal agents come to recognize who are the 'liberals' and who are the 'non-liberals.' In other words, the self-conception and collective identity of liberal communities made up of liberal selves is both cognitively and emotionally constructed (Koschut, 2017, p. 10)

Building on Koschut argumentation, this paper claims that the Community of Shared Future for Mankind, China's strategic narrative, is underpinned by emotionality. It is used as a means to define a criterium to belong or not to the CSFM and to the accepted or not accepted behaviors of those who make part of it.

In terms of its meta-narrative, the CSFM presents three distinctive phases loaded with emotional content: First, a terrible and sad world destroyed by World Wars and characterized by the opposition of great powers. Second, a hopeful phase opened by the establishment of the United Nations. Third, such peaceful phase reached a crucial moment, a hinge, that can lead to a return to that initial dreadful state or to the establishment of a rightful path to peace with the consolidation of the Community of Shared Future for Mankind. The traumatic first stage is the motor used in the narrative to bring together all the countries to avoid a repetition of that scenario.

This meta-narrative is, all throughout, accompanied with rhetorical devices and strategies that rely on emotions to reinforce specific messages, such as oxymorons, antonyms, idioms, proverbs, quotes from famous authors, and metaphors. The imperative "we should" is also used jointly with encouraging verbs phrases and can be highlighted. These strategies emphasize on the way members of the community should feel about the way they act, associating positive emotions to desired behaviors while assigning negative emotions to the undesired ones. These "feeling structure" supports the narrative of a community.

Two emotions emerge as underpinning the narrative. On one hand, fear is used to bring states together. Fear is the result of the possibility of returning to that sad and terrible past. However, the narrative also relies on hope in order to further consolidate the bonds of the community and promote the expected behaviors. Hope is linked to the possibility of working together and it makes states responsible for making the decision of evading the most fearful scenario. These two emotions are intertwined, reinforce each other, and underpin the narrative of the community.

Finally, the conclusions of the present research stress on the importance of including the emotional dimension within the analysis of the field of international politics. Rather than being an exhaustive analysis, they also aspire to serve as a spark for debate and an exploration of the ways in which China is engaging with the international community and the role emotions play in that interaction.

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