

Asian Journal of International Affairs (AJIA)

(A Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Journal and Indexed in NepJOL)

ISSN : 2822-1958

Volume 1, Special Issue, December 2021

<https://ksl.edu.np/subcenter/asian-journal-of-international-affairs>

Published by

Kathmandu School of Law

Suryabinayak-4, Dadhikot, Bhaktapur, Bagmati, Nepal

Email: ajia.journal@gmail.com, ajia@ksl.edu.np URL: <https://ksl.edu.np/>

Three Dimensions to Understand “a Global Community of Shared Future”

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DOI: Available at NepJOL

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Manuscript Received: 4 August 2021 **Final Revision:** 5 January 2022 **Accepted:** 7 January 2022

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Wang Yiwei & Zhang Pengfei

Abstract

A Global Community of Shared Future for mankind (GCSF)¹ was put forward from legalizing of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, China's answer to the questions of our times, to promote human progress echoing the trend of the times. It provides a new world view and has significant implications for the world. However, the current literature is insufficient in helping us comprehend the concept comprehensively. In this article, we will propose a model to understand GCSF from three dimensions, in which we consider GCSF as a process, instead of a static state. Three dimensions are given to grasp both the conceptual and practical aspects of GCSF: the time dimension, space dimension, and logic dimension. We argue that we should understand GCSF from the angles of history, reality, and the future. It starts from the neighbouring countries, then developing countries, and finally seeks to include all peoples in the world. Besides, the shared future is based on an independent and connected future. Common targets, common responsibilities, and a common identity are necessary for laying the foundations for GCSF. The model can be adapted to analyze the political phenomenon of GCSF in different periods and scales. As the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the major international cooperation mechanism to build GCSF, we adopt the model to analyze the case of China-Europe relations in the context of BRI.

Keywords: *A Global Community of Shared Future, Dynamic Model, Foreign Policy of China, Belt and Road Initiative, Europe*

Introduction

The world is divided and falls into chaos after long peace in unity and is united again from chaos. This we have known since time began.²

A clear shift in China's foreign policy has been recognized by the public since 2012. A series of foreign policies marked a new stage of China's diplomacy, of which a global community of shared future (*ren lei ming yun gong tong ti*, GCSF) is the cornerstone. Its relationship with former policies such as “a harmonious world” should be made clear, as well as that with the traditions such as “*tianxia*” in ancient China. The article intends to provide a general model to understand China's global initiative “a global community

¹ “A Global Community of Shared Future” (人类命运共同体) was also translated as “a Community of Shared Future for Mankind” and “Human Community with a Shared Future”, and used to be translated as “Community of Common Destiny for Humankind/Mankind”.

² This is the first sentence in a Chinese classic novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Written in the 14th century in the early Ming Dynasty, the book is a fine reflection of the world view of the Chinese people and still influences the global perspective of them now.

of shared future”. The phrase has been considered as the core value of China’s diplomacy and marked the principal target of China’s foreign policy.³ Conspicuously, it is included in China’s constitution and the party constitution of CPC. However, this leads to more skeptics about the implications of the phrase, and it is considered as a means of exerting normative influence in the world.⁴ But we should admit that, as a rising power in the world, it is understandable that China seeks to promote new values for the world.⁵ Besides, regarding its previous “low-profile diplomacy” strategy,⁶ such transition reflects China’s confidence in its national capabilities, culture, and institutions and its ambition in the future world.⁷ When Chinese president Xi Jinping labels the phrase the future of global governance and link it with the very survival of human civilization,⁸ we see a clear message that GCSF is more than a policy tool for China itself, but implies a grand design of China. Thus, if we seek to grasp the genuine implications of the concept, we should go beyond it and examine it from different angles. We see that Chinese officials tend to put GCSF in the context of human history and certain regions. So, it is convenient to clarify its meaning through these lenses. Also, the logic behind it is worthy of discovering.

However, the current literature about GCSF is plentiful in volume but narrow in range. Most study focuses on China’s grand strategy behind it, predicting its impact on the global order. Though the nature of it is also under in-depth academic exploration, most scholars consider GCSF as more a concept in mind than a guide for action,⁹ and only when interpreting the role of GCSF in certain areas, the more practical possibility is recognized.¹⁰ Apart from that, the implications of GCSF for global governance and international laws are also discussed.¹¹ However, there is a lack of approaches to

³ Though the expressions are diverse, scholars unanimously consider it as the core of China’s foreign policy. See Lutgard Lams, ‘Examining Strategic Narratives in Chinese Official Discourse under Xi Jinping’, *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, volume. 23: 3 2018, pp. 387-411; Fan Wang, ‘Community of Shared Future for Mankind: Theoretic Significance and Practical Drive’, *Contemporary World*, volume 3:3 2016, pp. 8-11.

⁴ Jacob Mardell, ‘The ‘community of common destiny’ in Xi Jinping’s New Era’, *The Diplomat*, Tokyo, Issue 35, 25 October 2017.

⁵ Emilian Kavalski, ‘The struggle for recognition of normative powers: Normative power Europe and normative power China in context’, *Cooperation and Conflict*, volume 48:1, 2013, pp. 247-67.

⁶ The full expression is “hide your capacities, bide your time.” It is based on two judgments: the economy is the priority of China and peace and development are the theme of the time. For over 20 years, it has been the predominant strategy of China.

⁷ Jisheng Sun, ‘zhong guo guo ji hua yu quan de su zao yu ti sheng lu jing —— yi dang de shi ba da yi lai de zhong guo wai jiao shi jian wei li [China’s Approach to Shape and Improve Its International Discursive Power: Diplomatic Practice Since the 18th Party Congress as an Example]’, *World Economics and Politics*, volume no. 1, 2019, pp. 19-43, 156.

⁸ See Xi Jinping, ‘Full text: Speech by Xi Jinping at the United Nations Office at Geneva.’

⁹ Xing Qu, ‘ren lei ming yun gong tong ti de jia zhi guan ji chu [Value basis for a global community of shared future]’, *Qiusbi*, volume no. 1, 2013, pp. 53-55.

¹⁰ Paul Zilungisele Tembe, ‘Construction of A Community of Shared Future for Humankind in the Context of An Emerging New World Order’ *Contemporary World*, Issue 2, China, 2019, pp. 8-12.

¹¹ See Qiyi Gao, ‘quan qiu zhi li, ren de liu dong yu ren lei ming yun gong tong ti [Global Governance, Mobility of People and Community of Shared Destiny]’, *World Economics and Politics*, volume no. 1, 2017, pp. 30-45, 156-57; Kanglin Zhou & Lixin Hao, ‘gou jian ren lei ming yun gong

provide a comprehensive understanding of GCSF. Hence, it still seems a vague concept with ambiguity.¹²

The article's methodology is qualitative by using a dynamic model. It analyses official documents and traces the process of GCSF development. It provides a three-dimensional model to examine both the concept and practice of GCSF. The model includes three dimensions: time, space, and logic. It claims that historically, GCSF is originated from the existing culture, norms, policies, and the whole human history. Besides, it proposes clear targets for the contemporary world and is future-oriented. Spatially, the building of GCSF is an enlarging process from the neighbouring countries to the world as a whole through cooperation in public health, climate change, etc., as COVID-19 indicates. Also, the tangible and intangible fields are both included in the process. Logically, for the words of "shared future", GCSF is an advance of independent future, connected future, and finally the integrated and shared future. In this course, common targets, common responsibilities, and a common identity should be framed.

The article proceeds as follows. There will be four parts. The first part reviews the current literature related to GCSF, including those discussing the grand strategies of China and GCSF itself, as well the issues related to it. In the second part, we introduce our model and each dimension will be elaborated. In the third and fourth part, as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the most significant approach to build GCSF, we adapt our model to analyze China's efforts to build GCSF with Europe in the name of BRI. We first use the model to study BRI in general and then China's cooperation with Europe in BRI.

What GCSF is and Means

"A human community with a shared future implies that the destiny and future of every nation and country are tied tightly together. This means we stick together through thick and thin, stand together through good and bad, and work to build this planet of ours into one large harmonious family and to realize humankind's aspiration for a better life".¹³ The discussion about GCSF is diverse. Much attention has been paid to

tong ti — quan qiu zhi li de zhong guo fang an [A global community of shared future: China Plan for Global Governance],” *Marxism & Reality*, volume no. 1, 2017, pp. 1-7; Xiaoming Wu, 'The "Chinese Approach" Ushers in a New Model of Global Governance Civilization', *Social Sciences in China*, volume 39:4 2018, pp. 139-53; Xiaochun Zhao, 'In Pursuit of a Community of Shared Future: China's Global Activism in Perspective', *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, volume 4:1, 2018, pp. 23-37 ; Yun Li, 'jian she ren lei ming yun gong tong ti de guo ji fa yuan li yu lu jing' [Doctrine of International Law and Ways to Construct the Community of Common Destiny for Mankind],” *Chinese Review of International Law*, volume no. 1, 2016, pp. 48-70; Zhang Hui, 'A Global Community of Shared Future-The Contemporary Development of the Social Foundations Theory of International Law', *Social Sciences in China*, volume 40: 1, 2019, pp. 186-202.

¹² Denghua Zhang, 'The Concept of 'Community of Common Destiny' in China's Diplomacy: Meaning, Motives and Implications' *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, volume 5:2, 2018, pp. 196-207.

¹³ Xi Jinping, *On Building a Human Community with a Shared Future*, Central Compilation & Translation Press, Beijing, 2019, p. 521.

the concept after Xi Jinping made significant changes in China's foreign policy. Several scholars have observed that in Xi Jinping's terms, China's foreign policy is becoming more assertive.¹⁴ The two-decades low-profile policy of "low-profile diplomacy", which was put forward in Deng Xiaoping era, is being replaced by a more active one.¹⁵ They believe that with the increasing national capabilities, China wants more leadership in the world, and GCSF is the fruit of the pursuit.¹⁶

Also, they believed that GCSF reflects China's increasing national capabilities and has significant implications for the world and regional order. Fu Ying, a well-known Chinese former diplomat, reveals that GCSF is China's new vision for the world. She lists three bases for the concept: cooperative security, common development, and political inclusiveness. It is a moderate expression of China's attitudes towards international affairs.¹⁷ Vladimir Yakunin is optimistic about GCSF by saying it is crucial for the sustainability of the world order.¹⁸ Nadège Rolland holds the opinion that GCSF reflects China's vision for a new world order, which is different from the current one and more favourable to its interests and status.¹⁹ Zhao Xiaochun thinks that GCSF is the primary goal of China's foreign policy and signifies that China is entering an era of global activism.²⁰

There are also several scholars holding a more suspicious view. They label GCSF as China's ambition to grasp the leadership of the international system. Mardell notices that China's foreign policy under the presidency of Xi Jinping is more active than before and seeks greater leadership in international politics. For him, the message behind GCSF is that both China and the world are entering a new era or a period of change. But from a long-term perspective, it is more a return than a shift.²¹ Smith interprets GCSF and the whole foreign policies in the first terms of Xi Jinping as a pursuit of legitimacy in the liberal order led by the West, namely the US. Adopting the views of the English School, he tries to grasp current China's world view in a historical context, claiming that "China is quickly returning to its original status in the world, albeit a world that is not of its making."²² That is to say, China is confident in its political system and hopes to reshape the regional order, which is possible in the

¹⁴ Aaron L. Friedberg, 'The Sources of Chinese Conduct: Explaining Beijing's Assertiveness', *The Washington Quarterly*, volume 37:4, January 2015

¹⁵ Xuetong Yan, *Leadership and the rise of great powers* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2019.

¹⁶ Jin Kai, 'Can China build a community of common destiny?', *The Diplomat*, Tokyo, 28 November 2013.

¹⁷ Fu Ying, 'China's vision for the world: A community of shared future', *The Diplomat*, Tokyo, 22 June 2017.

¹⁸ Vladimir Yakunin, 'The Future of World Order Building a Community of Common Destiny', *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, volume 3:02, 2017, pp. 159-173.

¹⁹ Nadège Rolland, 'Beijing's Vision for a Reshaped International Order', *China Brief*, Washington DC, volume 18: 3, 26 February 2018, p. 3.

²⁰ Zhao (n 10).

²¹ Mardell (n 3).

²² Stephen N. Smith, 'Community of common destiny: China's "new assertiveness" and the changing Asian order', *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, volume 73:1 2018, pp. 449-63.

international society. Similarly, Jin Kai thinks that GCSF is part of China's ambition to make sure that it is a leader in the global system.²³

For the nature of the concept, whether it is an idea or a practical policy, most people are inclined to accept the former one. Chen Xiangyang labels GCSF as an emerging perspective on world order.²⁴ Lams describes GCSF as a narrative that is part of the official discourse under Xi Jinping, behind which lies a reciprocal global outlook diverging from the zero-sum model.²⁵

Apart from them, Wang Fan believes that GCSF is both a significant theory and a practice, which reflects China's worldview and addresses the crucial issues of globalization and international security. According to Wang, there are four steps to build a global community of shared future. The first one is to start from the regional level, and the next third one is to strengthen respect, equality, communication, and cooperation.²⁶

There are also researches on the implications of GCSF for regions, in which they found GCSF is inspiring for action. Ding Jun and Cheng Hongjin focus on the relations between GCSF and Middle East governance. They find that the proposal is suitable for the diversity of culture in the region and meets the need of the local people.²⁷ Hoang Thi Ha adopts a more skeptical position towards it when examining the response of ASEAN towards the proposal. According to his article, the peril behind GCSF is that it may lead to an asymmetrical relationship between China and ASEAN countries. As a result, Open Regionalism will still be the top choice for ASEAN.²⁸ Tembe has grasped a crucial part of the implications of GCSF by recognizing that GCSF indicates a farewell to the logic of subordination and encourages every country to adhere to its values and development modes. Hence, it is advisable for South-South cooperation.²⁹

Wu Xiaoming considers GCSF as an alternative to the current world order and his focus is on global governance. For him, GCSF embodies a civilization world order, which transcends the logic of modernity and is a new model for global governance.³⁰ Similar views are widely held in China's academic circles. For example, Gao Qiqi (2017) says that the two major challenges of global governance, structural imbalance, and

²³ Kai (n 14).

²⁴ Xiangyang Chen, 'yi "ren lei ming yun gong tong ti" yin ling shi jie zhi xu chong su [Reshaping the world order by a global community of shared future], *Contemporary World*, volume no. 1, 2016, pp. 18-21.

²⁵ Lams (n 2)

²⁶ Wang (n 2).

²⁷ Jun Ding & Hongjin Cheng, 'China's Proposition to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind and the Middle East Governance', *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, volume 11: 4 2017, pp. 1-14.

²⁸ Hoang Thi Ha, 'Understanding China's Proposal for an ASEAN-China Community of Common Destiny and ASEAN's Ambivalent Response', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, volume 41: 2, 2019, pp. 223-54.

²⁹ Tembe (n 9).

³⁰ Wu (n 10).

civilization clash, can only be solved by an even and more equal model, in which free flow of people is crucial. GCSF just advocated such a model.³¹

As related to global governance, international law is also an often discussed field in the literature of GCSF. James Crawford focuses on the part related to a global community of shared future in the Joint Declaration on the Promotion of International Law, issued by China and Russia, saying it touched upon the core principles of international law.

Xu Fengna and Su Jinyuan figure out that GCSF is a new element in the United Nations General Assembly's 72/250 Resolution about the negotiation of the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). They believe that, compared with the "Common Heritage of Mankind" (CHM) and the "Benefits and Interests of All Countries" (BIAC), the former guiding principle of the negotiations, GCSF is a better choice to guide the process.³² Zhang Hui says that GCSF is a response to the problems in international law and promotes the rule of law in international relations as China advocates, as well as China's international normative power.³³ Besides, the significance of GCSF for human rights is also discussed,³⁴ where GCSF is seen as an echo of a pluralistic concept of human rights and a view on human rights of the developing countries. In addition, some research attempts to understand GCSF from an ethnological perspective. Liu Chuanchun thinks that GCSF goes beyond the national concept and is a "construction of world system".³⁵

However, there is a lack of a comprehensive model to help understand the concept of GCSF. Yu Sui tried to examine it from five perspectives of times, pragmatism, inclusiveness, demonstration, universality. They are proper angles to view GCSF but they are not systematic overall.³⁶ In an inspiring article, Xu Yanlin and Li Cong use a chronological structure to illustrate the meaning of GCSF. They claim that GCSF can be interpreted in a three-dimensional perspective. For history, GCSF goes beyond the nation-centered world order and promotes a civilization-centered order instead. For contemporary issues, it proposes a justice view different from the mainstream western justice theories. It indicates a new world order without power politics and hegemony.³⁷

³¹ Gao (n 10).

³² Fengna Xu & Jinyuan Su, 'Shaping "A Global Community of Shared Future": New Elements of General Assembly Resolution 72/250 on Further Practical Measures for the PAROS', *Space Policy*, volume 44, 2018, pp. 57-62.

³³ Zhang (n 11).

³⁴ See Weihua Zhang, 'The Human Rights Dimension in Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind', *The Journal of Human Rights*, volume 16:5, 2017, pp. 423-37; Ying Zhu, 'A Pluralistic Approach to Human Rights in a Community of Shared Future for Mankind', *The Journal of Human Rights*, volume 16: 2, 2017, pp. 171-75.

³⁵ Chuanchun Liu, 'ren lei ming yun gong tong ti nei han de zhi yi, zheng ming yu ke xue ren shi [On the Query, Disputes and Scientific Cognition of the Essence of a Community of Common Destiny for All Mankind]', *Studies on Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping Theories*, volume no. 1, 2015, pp. 85-90,92.

³⁶ Yu Sui, 'Five Characteristics of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind', *和平 (Peace)* Issue 4, 2017, pp. 38-40.

³⁷ Yanling Xu and Cong Li, "ren lei ming yun gong tong ti " jia zhi yi yun de san chong wei du [Three dimensions of the values of "a global community of shared future"]", *Scientific Socialism*, volume no. 1, 2016, pp. 108-13.

Nevertheless, these researches have not provided a systematic approach to understanding GCSF. As a result, Zhang Denghua finds that GCSF is unclear in meaning and is used incoherently in China. Such ambiguity would make it difficult for the developing countries to accept it, let alone the developed countries.³⁸ Even, such an obstacle is also a cause for the disfavour of the concept.³⁹ The unclear meaning of it requires more research to explain GCSF.

Moreover, most of the current explanations on GCSF rely too much on the speeches of Chinese officials and policy papers of China, which often lead more to a summary of them than academic exploration.⁴⁰ This article also considers the official texts as important resources for the research, but it tries to decode them in the context of different dimensions. Moreover, it examines the facts and practices during the whole process of China's efforts to promote it.

Also, most research is based on a single perspective and talks about the implications of GCSF. Few types of research are devoted to a comprehensive model to analyse GCSF itself. The article seeks to help fill the vacancy by providing a dynamic model to understand a global community of shared future comprehensively.

A Three-Dimensional Interpretation of GCSF

In this section, we will introduce our three-dimensional model, which focuses on process. It does not consider GCSF as a path to a certain state for the world. Rather, it is considered as a "box" to be filled with new ideas and a combination of time, space, and several phases. It has a certain fundamental orientation but there is much room for new ideas to make a worldly accepted one. That implies that when we try to evaluate the cooperation with aims of building a community of shared future, we should recognize the historical context, practical measures, geographical locations, and logical phases of it. A global community of shared future itself is a multi-dimensional concept. This also means that we need a complex model to comprehend it.

Our approach consists of three dimensions: time, space, and logic. Each dimension has three procedures to measure. As we put it, though the phrase "a global community of shared future" indicated a sense of destination, the whole structure behind it is flexible.

It is undeniable that GCSF contains certain strategic pursuits of China. But such pursuit must be integrated with the common interest and expressed in a way that is acceptable for all. Thus, it necessarily includes the common history, values, and demands of the world. This is what has expanded the horizon of the three dimensions and shaped what GCSF is.

³⁸ Zhang (n 11).

³⁹ Chen (n 22).

⁴⁰ Jilong Zhang, "guo nei xue jie guan yu ren lei ming yun gong tong ti si xiang yan jiu shu ping [A Research Review of the Community of Common Destiny for all Mankind Thought in Domestic Academia]," *Socialism Studies*, volume no. 1, 2016, pp. 165-72.

Time dimension

We first need to go back to the cultural roots of GCSF to explore its essences. Traditionally, the world view of the Chinese is influenced by three types of thinking with different orientations: Buddhism's thoughts of Karma create the awareness of the past factors of life,⁴¹ the official orthodoxy, Confucianism, cares about issues in the current life, and Taoism leaves the possibility for the future.⁴² This view fosters a broad perspective of worldview and still has impacts on China's foreign policy today.

The time dimension is about the origins, positions, and targets of GCSF, which means history, reality, and future. We consider GCSF as a phrase that is shaped by both the Chinese and Western traditions and history. It also provides certain guidelines for the contemporary world. Ultimately, the concept embraces the challenges in the future world and GCSF itself is the core of the solution.

First, we should understand GCSF in the context of history. GCSF tries to activate shared traditions of lasting peace and common security.

It is widely accepted that the foundation of GCSF is a combination of Chinese traditional culture and Western civilization.⁴³

One often-discussed factor is China's *tianxia* (all under heaven) concept, which is an inclusive world view or structure deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy.⁴⁴ However, *tianxia* is more imagination and GCSF seeks to be a reality. The latter is not self-centered as the former, because that is both impractical and unreasonable. As modern technologies have reshaped the linkages between social and economic systems around the world, the closed and unitary international system has already lost its foundations and values. The only choice for GCSF is to embrace the future and works for the benefit of the whole on an equal footing. It has to abandon the practice of the Tribute System as well, where China is the center of its followers. In this sense, GCSF is a target, a process, and, in certain circumstances, a fact.

Besides, it has been linked with Marxism. It is argued that Marx's theories on world

⁴¹ Zhengyu Guo, 'jian lun fo jiao de yin guo bao ying shuo [A brief discussion of the karma in Buddhism]', *Academic Journal of Jinyang*, volume no. 1, 2005, pp. 62-65.

⁴² Dahua Cui, 'dao jia si xiang ji qi xian dai yi yi [Taoism and its modern implications]', *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*, volume no. 1, 1995, pp. 36-40.

⁴³ Limin Lin, 'Why China First Advocates Creating a Community of a Shared Future for Humanity in the 21st Century', *Contemporary International Relations*, Issue 6, 2017, pp. 32-35; Wenjuan Xie, "'ren lei ming yun gong tong ti" de li shi ji chu he xian shi jing yu [Historical basis and current environment of a global community of shared future]', *Journal of Henan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, volume 43, 2016, Zhao (n 10).

⁴⁴ A detailed introduction of the concept could be found in Zhao Tingyang's publications: Zhao Tingyang, 'An All-under-heaven theory', *China Security*, volume 4: 2, 2008; Zhao Tingyang, 'A Philosophical Analysis of All-under-heaven', *Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Journal of Humanities*, 2008; Zhao Tingyang, 'Chinese world outlook', in Deng Zhenglai (ed), *Globalization and Localization: The Chinese Perspective*, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., Singapore, 2011; Zhao Tingyang, 'Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept All-under-heaven', in William Callahan (ed.), *China Orders the World*. The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, 2011.

history and community, as well as the liberalization of humans, are part of the theoretical basis for GCSF.⁴⁵ Besides, it is based on China's foreign policies in the past decades, such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Particularly, it transformed Mao's "three world theory" into a common community.

What should be pointed out is that it also comes from the established western values, especially the sovereignty principles of the Westphalia system, international humanitarianism, and the principles in the UN charter.⁴⁶ The crucial thing here is that GCSF embraces the fundamental rules and norms of the current world order. Thus, it is not an attempt to topple it, but to revive it according to new situations in the world.

Importantly, GCSF seeks to combine the common history of humankind, including the ancient, modern, and contemporary history of China, the West, and humankind as a whole. We should understand GCSF by putting it in the long history of human beings. We know that the ancient world system is a multi-centric and diverse one,⁴⁷ but the connection between different international sub-systems and civilizations was unstable.⁴⁸ What it means for our analysis is that GCSF can be seen as a restoration of the decentralized world in the interconnected age. The fact that both the Eastern and Western traditions and history are the basis of GCSF reveals its intention to shape common values, which are indispensable to an interconnected peaceful, and secure world.

Second, GCSF is also a proposal for the contemporary world, which intends to shape common prosperity and an inclusive international system.

GCSF answers perhaps the most crucial current question for China: with strong national capabilities, what does it want as it acts increasingly vigorously in the international arena? Ruan Zongze argued that GCSF has become the core value of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and the international goal (World Dream) of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (the Chinese Dream).⁴⁹ GCSF makes it clear, as described in Xi's speech in UN in 2014, 2015, and 2017, they are the targets in five aspects, namely the five pillars of GCSF: (1) Politically, to build an equal and trustworthy partnership, in which a new approach to state-to-state relations, dialogues, mutual understanding are required.⁵⁰ (2) On security, it advocates a security vision that is just

⁴⁵ Wenwen Zhou, Meiqing Lin & Jinke Zhao, "lun xi jin ping " ren lei ming yun gong tong ti " si xiang de ke xue nei han he zhong da yi yi —— ji yu ma ke si zhu yi li lun shi jiao [The content and implications of "a community of shared future" of Xi Jinping — A Marxism Perspective]', *Journal of Socialist Theory Guide*, volume no. 1, 2017, pp. 80-84.

⁴⁶ Xi Jinping, 'Secure a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and strive for the great success of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era,' *19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, 18th Politburo, Beijing, 18-24 October 2017.

⁴⁷ Samir Amin, 'The Ancient World-Systems versus the Modern Capitalist World-System', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* volume 14: 3, 1991, pp. 349-85.

⁴⁸ Andre Gunder Frank, 'A theoretical introduction to 5,000 years of world system history', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, volume 13: 2, 1990, pp. 155-248.

⁴⁹ Zongze Ruan, 'ren lei ming yun gong tong ti : zhong guo de "shi jie meng"', *China International Studies*, volume no. 1, 2016, pp. 20-37.

⁵⁰ 'China and the World in the New Era', The State Council Information Office, 2019, Beijing.

based on mutual consultation and pursues common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. (3) For the economy, it is to build a world of common prosperity through win-win cooperation. It advocates interdependent development without asymmetry. (4) In culture, it seeks to increase inter-civilization exchanges to promote harmony, inclusiveness, and respect for differences. (5) Ecologically, it implies that the international community should make the world clean and beautiful by pursuing green and low-carbon development.⁵¹

Such pursuit is an interpretation of China's principal domestic policies in the world that can be accepted by the international community. In the report at the 18th National Congress of CPC, "the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan" is established. During Xi Jinping's term, it is labelled as the principal strategy for building socialism with Chinese characteristics. The five spheres are identical to the five pillars of GCSF. Every aspect of them can find their counterpart in the domestic policies in China. This reflects China's view on governance, integration of national governance, regional governance, and global governance. As GCSF tries to establish a decentralized network, it calls for coordinated domestic governance of countries, which is related to the logic dimension below.

Third, GCSF is a proposal for the future: building a green and sustainable world, seeking global dynamic consensus in the coming technological changes.

The most obvious trend of the world is that Industrial Revolution 4.0 has begun,⁵² as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, the Internet of Things, etc., are reshaping human society as well as humans themselves.⁵³ As mentioned before, it is argued that the world in the future will be a decentralized one, and what GCSF seeks is just a decentralized partner network. To catch the trend of the times, GCSF is oriented to the facts in the future, because if it wants to matter in the world, it must grasp the trends of the time and be able to provide solutions to the problems that might occur in the future.

We can see this inclination in the governance in the emerging governance areas, such as high sea, outer space, cyber and polar areas. GCSF means that they should not be guided by jungle rule as the traditional fields.⁵⁴ Common development is crucial for the stability of the world in the future. For example, now artificial intelligence is rapidly developing, but the fact is that about 840 million people have even no access

⁵¹ Xinping (n 7).

⁵² Rabeih Morrar, Husam Arman & Saeed Mousa, 'The fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0): A social innovation perspective', *Technology Innovation Management Review*, volume 7: 11, 2017, pp. 12-20.

⁵³ Ajay Agrawal, Joshua S Gans, and Avi Goldfarb, 'Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence: Prediction versus judgment', *Information Economics and Policy*, volume 47, 2019, pp. 1-6; Steven Livingston and Mathias Risse, 'The future impact of artificial intelligence on humans and human rights', *Ethics & International Affairs*, volume 33: 2, 2019, pp. 141-58.

⁵⁴ Xi Jinping, 'Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road,' Opening Ceremony of 'The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation', 14 May 2017.

to electricity at all.⁵⁵ They may be further marginalized with the development of AI.⁵⁶ Extremism might be intensified as the gaps would be greater. It attempts to avoid tragedy in the future and pursue a kind of world justice. Again, such efforts can also be found in China's domestic policy of eliminating poverty.

The emphasis here is the word "common", which will be further discussed in this article. GCSF is a way to solve the common challenges by the common values of a different culture. Accordingly, it creates new values for humankind. Xi mentioned, at the general debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly that "the greatest ideal is to create a world truly shared by all. Peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom are common values of all mankind and the lofty goals of the United Nations."⁵⁷

Thus, naturally, GCSF pays attention to the most issue, sustainable development, not only in the economy but also in culture, environment, etc. It promotes the world order defined by civilization and a holistic view of human beings, which is different from the narrow-mind nation and ideology perspective. A new type of international relations and "green" development model is necessary for it. In the context of China's political discourse, "green" contains higher pursuit than the word "eco-friendly" in Europe's political context. That is why we even see that in China finance and lifestyle can be "green".

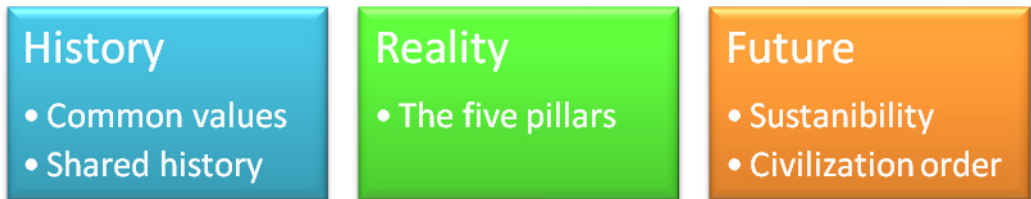


Figure 1: The Time dimension of GCSF

Spatial dimension

This dimension deals with how GCSF should be constructed. "Space" here should be used in its broadest meaning: not only the range of the traditional areas but the emerging tangible and intangible ones such as deep sea, outer space, cyber, etc. As we can see, geographically, the primary access of GCSF in the neighbouring regions of China as they share the closed cultural, historical, and geographical links with it. Also, it is extended to all the developing countries, with a focus on the countries of the South.⁵⁸ A community of shared future for mankind is the ultimate goal. At the same

⁵⁵ 'World Energy Outlook—Executive Summary,' *OECD/IEA, 2018*, Paris.

⁵⁶ Bernard Arogyaswamy and John Hunter, 'The Impact of Technology and Globalization on Employment and Equity: An Organizing Framework for Action', *International Journal of Global Sustainability*, volume 3: 1, 2019, pp. 49-72.

⁵⁷ Jinping (n 49).

⁵⁸ Wang Yiwei, 'ren lei ming yun gong tong ti de nei han yu shi ming (The connotation and mission of the community of common destiny for all mankind)', *Frontiers*, 2017, pp. 6-12.

time, it goes beyond the traditional fields of governance and plays a role in the rule-making in the new fields.

First, the building of GCSF is a gradual process of inclusiveness and openness. Again, we begin with the analysis of the very basis of it. According to sociologist Fei Xiaotong, traditionally the rural Chinese view the world via “a ripple model”, in which they see the world from themselves, then the closed people, and gradually extend to people further.⁵⁹ This theory is inspiring for our analysis of the geological elements of GCSF. 14 countries border China, which means that a stable regional order is crucial for it. Xi said, “China always pursues friendship and partnership with its neighbours, and seeks to bring amity, security and common prosperity to its neighbourhood.”⁶⁰

It is true because only in a stable regional environment can China survive and thrive. The first step of GCSF was the community of shared future between China and the neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Laos, Cambodia, and organizations such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in which BRI is a crucial way to strengthen China’s regional cooperation with these neighbours.

Then, the developing countries, namely the South countries, are more likely to welcome it. China claims that the developing countries are naturally in a community of shared future and they are the primary participants of GCSF.⁶¹ China officially declares that it has the “four confidence” (*si ge zhi xin*), respectively in its path, institutions, theories and culture. By GCSF, it hopes to build such confidence in other developing countries, hence together they can work for new world order. The key of GCSF is that “all countries should jointly shape the future of the world, participate in writing international rules, manage global affairs together, and ensure that development outcomes are shared by all.”⁶² It indicates that the developing countries are the best partners for China to establish a new pattern in the world. Hence, China will work closely with them at first.

To make it a global community of all peoples is the final stage. Currently, the problems of the world are partly originated from the decline of world order,⁶³ and uncertainty remains after the 2020 American presidential election. If the current model does not work well, then new values are required to fix it. GCSF is intended to propose a new model and make it more inclusive, but not to change it. In the 27th group study of CPC politburo, Xi said that “More challenges in the world call for faster reform of

⁵⁹ Chih-i Chang & Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China: A Study of the Rural Economy of Yunnan*, Routledge, 1st edition, 2010.

⁶⁰ ‘Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People’s Republic of China At UNESCO Headquarters,’ 2014.

⁶¹ Wang Yiwei, “ren lei ming yun gong tong ti de zhong gong luo ji [CCP logic behind a community with shared future for mankind],” *Contemporary World*, 2018.

⁶² Xi Jinping, ‘Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind’, 70th Session of UN General Assembly, New York, 28 September 2015.

⁶³ G John Ikenberry, ‘The plot against American foreign policy: Can the liberal order survive’, *Foreign Affairs*, volume 96: 2, 2017, p. 2; Stewart M Patrick, “Trump and world order: the return of self-help,” *Foreign Aff.*, volume 96: 2, p. 52.

global governance system".⁶⁴ For Xi, a just global governance system should be based on common interests, solve disputes via cooperation and focus on joint development.

Second, GCSF covers areas of traditional and emerging areas. Despite the traditional geographical space, GCSF also includes governance in the emerging fields. Initially, GCSF focuses on the hot-spot fields, where rules have already been written but conflicts have remained. Hence, a new model of cooperation meets the expectation of the disfavoured countries. Then, the new fields such as cyberspace, outer space, and polar governance are likely to be the place to put GCSF into practice, as there is a vacuum of norms and rules and consensus of cooperation and inclusiveness are needed to escape the unfairness that is seen in the traditional areas.

Also, it is expected to expand and cover the virtual world, such as a cyber-community of shared future. The transition into a virtual or semi-virtual world is likely to be the most significant one in the century. The nature of new technologies makes the virtual space essentially different from the traditional space. For example,

Block-chain leads to a decentralised system but the global governance heavily relied on hegemony in the experience. Thus, the international community has to revise its action of code and seek a new way of cooperation, and GCSF, as China says, can be the solution. That is why more abstract areas such as technology and humanities are also covered by GCSF. For these areas, China advocates that the principles guiding the new fields are peace, sovereignty, mutual benefit, and common governance, rather than zero-sum games.⁶⁵



Figure 2: The spatial dimension of GCSF

⁶⁴ The State Council, 'xi jin ping zai zhong gong zhong yang zheng zhi ju di er shi qi ci ji ti xue xi shi qiang diao tui dong quan qiu zhi li ti zhi geng jia gong zheng geng jia he li wei wo guo fa zhan he shi jie he ping chuang zao you li tiao jian (Xi Jinping emphasized a fairer global governance institution and more favorable neighboring environment in the 27th group study of Politburo); *China Government Official Website*, Beijing, 2015.

⁶⁵ Jinping (n 7).

Logical dimension

The logic of GCSF is to gradually narrow the cognitive gaps of national interests and values and construct a common identity. There are three stages to build it.

First, to build an independent future. For decades, countries are deeply embedded in the international system guided by the U.S. If China seeks to alter the course, it is self-evident that it encourages them to reduce their reliance on the U.S., namely “to be independent”.

To do this, China advocates a trustworthy security partnership,⁶⁶ which is different from the bilateral alliance system, where the Asian countries rely on the US for security but China for the economy. GCSF embodies China’s wish that every country should reduce its reliance on the US and the West.

When Xi said, “The core of GCSF is that the future of a country should be decided by its people, international rules are proposed by all, international affairs be managed together, and the fruits of development be shared by all countries”⁶⁷, he is indicating a departure from the alliance system. Similarly, BRI promotes independent development, which is different from the EU’s concept of transferring sovereignty.⁶⁸

Second, to build a connected future. Independence does not mean isolation. The independent future of countries should be connected by a partnership network. Coordinated security and economy can only be achieved when the efforts of countries to develop themselves are respected,⁶⁹ but it also requires interconnectivity. Here, the role of BRI is crucial. The core of BRI is to facilitate infrastructure construction and interconnectivity, enhance the complementarity and synergy between the policies and strategies of different countries, depending on practical cooperation, coordinate development in different regions and fields, and achieve prosperity together.⁷⁰ It is to foster intercontinental partnership links by projects and certain institutions such as AIIB. For China, this process is also seen as the construction of a new type of international relations.

Third, to build a shared future and emphasize common ground while reserving differences. Though the world is diverse, there are common memories, situations, and pursuits of them; hence a common identity and future can be pursued. As Fei Xiaotong said, “We cherish our own culture but also others. When every culture can be cherished by all, the Great Harmony will be achieved.”⁷¹ The concept of GCSF contains the

⁶⁶ Mikko Huotari et.al., *China’s Emergence as a Global Security Actor: Strategies for Europe*, Mercator Institute for China Studies, no. 4, July 2017.

⁶⁷ Jinping (n 52).

⁶⁸ Richard Bellamy, ‘Sovereignty, post-sovereignty, and pre-sovereignty: three models of the state, democracy, and rights within the EU’, in N.Walker (ed), *Sovereignty In Transition*, Hart, 2003, pp. 167-90.

⁶⁹ Yong Deng, ‘The Role of the EU in Asian Security: Between Transatlantic Coordination and Strategic Autonomy’, *Asia Policy*, volume 27: 1, 2020, pp. 105-26.

⁷⁰ Stephen Aris, ‘One Belt, One Road: China’s Vision of “Connectivity”’, *CSS Analyses in Security Policy*, no. 195, 2016.

⁷¹ Fei Xiaotong, ‘*fan si · dui hua · wen hua zhi jue*’ [Reflections, Dialogues and the Consciousness of Culture],” *Journal Of Peking University(Humanities And Social Sciences)*, no. 3, 1997, pp. 15-22, 158.

ideas of joint internets, sympathy for all, common values, collective responsibilities, and mutual benefit⁷² Accordingly, BRI emphasizes mutual assistance and equality and upholds seeking common in differences, inclusiveness, and dialogues.⁷³ It differs from America's exclusive alliance system in that China thinks high of openness, inclusiveness, harmony, and co-existence.

During the process, three common values need to be established. Namely, they are common targets, common responsibilities, and finally, a common identity.⁷⁴ Common targets are to reduce the argument about globalization. Now the uncertainty of the world highly lays in the fact that globalization is in trouble.⁷⁵ GCSF's solution is to create common targets for countries to pursue together. Common responsibilities are to solve the conflict of interests of countries to achieve joint development and peace. Common identity is aimed at narrowing the gaps between values. GCSF's ultimate goal is similar to the Kantian world,⁷⁶ where countries are friends. But it is not achieved by assimilation, but by remaining differences. This is also an aim of China's *tianxia* thought, as inclusiveness seeks harmony, not homogenization.⁷⁷ GCSF attempts to find common values and to avoid the confrontation of ideologies and the so-called clash of civilizations.⁷⁸

The logic of GCSF described here implies that China's foreign policy has evolved into a new phase. Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China, it has proposed several landmark foreign policies. The earlier ones are the Five Principle of Peaceful Coexistence and the "Three World" theory. Then, when China was gradually involved in the international system, it proposed Peaceful Rise and the outlook of A Harmonious World. GCSF is in line with these policies in essence but expressed different aspirations due to their changing context. Peaceful coexistence is more a static description of international relations, while GCSF indicates an active interaction in coexistence. Peaceful rise is a kind of self-expression and a harmonious world begun to sketch the global outlook of China. Now GCSF is a comprehensive description of the global order and the nature of international relations imaged by China. It goes further than a harmonious world as it includes various actors, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, transnational corporations, etc.

⁷² Jinping (n 44).

⁷³ William A. Callahan, 'China's "Asia Dream": The Belt Road Initiative and the new regional order', *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, volume 1: 3, 2016, pp. 226-43.

⁷⁴ Yiwei Wang, 'huai gu jin zhong wai xi dong xi nan bei xi jin ping ren lei ming yun gong tong ti si xiang de da qi po [The great boldness of vision in Xi Jinping's a global community of shared future],' *People's Tribune*, volume no. 1, 2017, pp. 40-41.

⁷⁵ Dani Rodrik, 'The trouble with globalization', *The Milken Institute Review*, volume 20: 4, 2017.

⁷⁶ Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics*, Cambridge University Press, England, volume 67, 1999

⁷⁷ Tingyang Zhao, 'The Contemporariness of Tianxia,' *Redefining A Philosophy for World Governance* (Springer, 2019), pp. 43-65.

⁷⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?,' in Charles Lockhart & Lane Crothers (eds), *Culture and Politics*, Palgrave Mcmillan, New York, 2000, pp. 99-118.

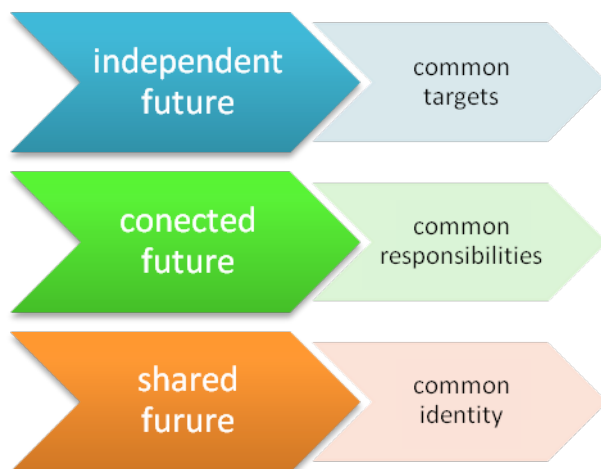


Figure 3: The Logical Dimension of GCSF

BRI and GCSF

In the following parts, we adapt our model to examine the process of constructing GCSF by BRI, with a focus on Europe. The reasons we select it to lie in the fact that the BRI is the most significant one to demonstrate the core of GCSF and Europe is a crucial partner for China to build GCSF, as it is now directly connected with China through BRI, which is officially part of GCSF, and the most important efforts to build the latter. It is accepted that China-Europe cooperation is supported by BRI.⁷⁹ We argue that in this process, the three dimensions of GCSF are illuminating. To be specific, the time dimension concerns the basis and guiding ideas of the BRI cooperation, the space dimension and the logical one can be understood in the procedure of promoting the initiative. In this section, we firstly re-examine BRI through the lens of GCSF, then we analyse the case of China-Europe cooperation under its frame in the next part.

BRI, the Silk Road Economic Belt, and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road are a product of history. Geographically, BRI is deeply rooted in the history of Eurasia. Before the Geographic Discovery, the centre of the world was Eurasia, and Silk Road is the principal trade route, while Europe was in the margin land.⁸⁰ However, when maritime trade developed, the ocean became the centre of trade for that sea transportation was cheaper and the value chains are established alongside coasts.⁸¹ Hence, it is reasonable for the landlocked countries to look forward to the revival of the Silk Road to narrow the development gap between them and the coastal regions. But the maritime countries can also embrace it as BRI goes beyond the traditional Silk Road and Highlights Ocean.

⁷⁹ Zhao Minghao, 'The Belt and Road Initiative and its Implications for China-Europe Relations', *The International Spectator*, volume 51: 4, 2016, pp. 109-18.

⁸⁰ Gu Ho Eom, 'Silk roads again: Revisiting roads connecting Eurasia', *Journal of Eurasian studies*, volume 8:1, 2017, pp. 1-2.

⁸¹ Paul Tae-Woo Lee, et al., Research trends and agenda on the Belt and Road (B&R) initiative with a focus on maritime transport, *Maritime Policy & Management*, volume 45: 3, 2018, pp. 282-300.

For both sides, BRI plans follow the five pillars of GCSEF. In the open speech at the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Xi Jinping has said, “In terms of reality, we find ourselves in a world fraught with challenges. The deficit in peace, development, and governance poses a daunting challenge to mankind.”⁸² To solve the three deficits, he mentioned the Silk Road civilization of 2000 years of history, which “embod[ies] the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit”, so China calls for building the Belt and Road into a road for peace, prosperity, of opening up, innovation, and a road connecting different civilizations.⁸³

What should be noted is that the BRI is closely linked with China’s aspiration of rejuvenation.⁸⁴ It is not only the rejuvenation of China but that of the Silk Road and the inland and river civilizations, which is not as expansive and complete as the maritime civilization. In short, the new order advocated by BRI should be interpreted in the context of civilization. Consequently, global geopolitics and globalization will be reshaped.

But BRI is not a geopolitical strategy.⁸⁵ The geographical location can not only determine the political sphere but also facilitate cooperation. Geography, regional economy, and traditional corporates are the key to the geo-economy. BRI is majorly propelled by the connectivity between sea and land, namely “a general connectivity framework consisting of six corridors, six connectivity routes, and multiple countries and ports”.⁸⁶ As our analysis shows, BRI starts from the neighbouring countries of China. The fact that the first use of the term, the Silk Road Economic Belt was in Kazakhstan, and Xi proposed the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in Indonesia, two neighbouring countries for China, is the evidence to reveal the priority of them in BRI. As a result, the most fruitful projects are also in these countries, such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Besides the neighbouring countries, BRI focuses on the developing countries. For these countries, China proposed “a right approach to justice and interests” to reduce their worries and seek a community of shared interests and responsibilities.⁸⁷ What should be noted is that when investing in infrastructure in these countries, China does

⁸² Jinping (n 52).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Justin Yifu Lin, ‘Chinas rejuvenation and the Belt and Road Initiative’ in Markus Taube & Yuan Li (eds), *How China’s Silk Road Initiative is Changing the Global Economic Landscape*, Routledge, London, 1st edition, 2019, pp. 19-36; Wang Zhongwu, Xu Qingtong & Wu Lingwei, ‘The Value Structure and Reconstruction of China’s Rural Civilization in the New Era—An Exploration of Rural Revitalization through the Rejuvenation of Rural Civilization’, *Contemporary Social Sciences (English)*, 2018.

⁸⁵ Yiwei Wang and Xuejun Liu, ‘Is The Belt And Road Initiative A Chinese Geo-Political Strategy?’ *Asian Affairs*, volume 50: 2, 2019, pp. 260-67.

⁸⁶ Xi Jinping, ‘Working Together to Deliver a Brighter Future For Belt and Road Cooperation,’ National People’s Congress of China, 2019, pp. 6-11.

⁸⁷ Wang Yi, ‘Work Together to Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind,’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2016.

not simply want payback, but also emphasizes culture preservation. For example, the Makkah Metro Pink Line, a pilgrim route for Muslims, is not simply built for economic or political considerations, but religious and psychological ones. As the first pink line in Saudi Arabia, it is located in Makkah, the holy land in the Islamic world, to reduce the traffic pressure of the pilgrim road. A similar example is the China-Nepal-India Cultural Corridors for Buddhists.

Officially, guided by the principles of consultation, contribution, and shared benefits, to build BRI is China's practice to build a community of shared with the countries along BRI.⁸⁸ To make it be trusted by other countries, China has provided more public goods, especially those in the emerging fields such as the internet.⁸⁹ This can be achieved by a new version of BRI or in the framework of a global infrastructure alliance or international development agency. BRI is to encourage the countries to follow their development path and promote the industrialization of the countries. It seeks to make the countries more independent in economy and politics. Only with sufficient infrastructure and investment, can the prosperity of the developing countries and the rise of emerging powers be possible. To participate in the program, countries established their development strategies, such as the "Bright Path" Initiative of Kazakhstan.

Beginning from the neighbouring countries, BRI gradually extended to European countries like Italy and Greece. Moreover, BRI promotes cooperation in finance, security, water resource, etc. It covers more geographical areas and governance areas in the process of building it.

More importantly, interconnectivity is the approach of China to build a community of shared future with neighbor countries. As Xi said, if the "Belt and Road" are likened to the two wings of a soaring Asia, then connectivity is like their arteries and veins. By the projects of BRI, the "victims" of geopolitics, the countries in the fracture belts of the plates, have become the benefitted ones of the interconnectivity of Eurasia, such as the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) such as Serbia and Poland, which are now the knot of China-Europe Land-Sea Express Route and the leading country of the "17+1" cooperation between China and CEECs and joined Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Uzbekistan, a landlocked country, is now a linkage point in the China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor. When China tries to promote a value, it must make others benefit from it.

The ultimate goal of BRI is to achieve sustainable development and harmony between civilizations and political systems, which is indispensable to China's rejuvenation strategy and the building of GCSF. As a secular nation, China has no preference for a certain religion, hence, what it wants most, is a coexistence of them as it will make the region stable. BRI is trying to bring three world civilizations: the Chinese civilization,

⁸⁸ Ming Hao, 'yi dai yi lu "yu " ren lei ming yun gong tong ti" ("One Belt and One Road" and "Community of Human Destiny")', *Journal of Minzu University of China(Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, Volume 42:6, 2015, pp. 23-30.

⁸⁹ 'Introduction', in Ines Sieckmann & Odila Triebel(eds), *A New Responsible Power China? China's Public Diplomacy for Global Public Goods*, ifa, stuttgart, 2018.

the Islamic civilization, the Christian civilization, together with via railway, highway, airlines, ships, tunnels, wires, and networks.

To sum up, from the perspective of time, BRI is based on the Silk Road in history and seeks to revive its spirits. Currently, it is aimed at promoting the cooperation of the region in the economy, security, sustainable development, and people-to-people exchanges. It tries to meet the challenges in the future by putting interconnectivity as a priority, which is a decentralized world view and suitable for the future world.

Spatially, it starts from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Then it is extended to the west and reached Europe and Africa. More practical projects are established in the neighbouring and developing countries, and new fields for governance are established when the cooperation in traditional areas is advancing, which just follow the spatial sequence in our model.

Logically, China cooperates with the independent development strategies with different countries, such as the Eurasia Alliance of Russia under the framework of BRI. Then it connects these strategies and coordinates them. Finally, it pursues harmony among different kinds of civilizations.

Europe in the Context of BRI and GCSF

If we admit that BRI is the best exhibition of GCSF, the case in BRI will help illustrate its essence and forms. Though no certain general agreements between China and the EU are signed in the name of GCSF, Europe is crucial in BRI. The cooperation between Europe and China under the name of the BRI project is plentiful and hence is a proper example to show the process. Their distance and cultural differences make China-Europe relation a platform that the main fracture of GCSF can be found.

To begin with, their cooperation is rooted in history. China and Europe were connected by Silk Road historically,⁹⁰ only be blocked due to the rise of Osman Turkey. When the Europeans were not able to trade with China, they were forced to go to the sea and start the colonist period. As a result, China and Europe delinked. BRI connects Eurasia again and revives history.⁹¹ Moreover, it makes the cooperation between China and Europe a continental one.

China and Europe are reconnected by BRI now. Europe is the terminal of the ancient Silk Road and is now a crucial partner for BRI.⁹² In space, the six economic corridors of BRI converge in Europe. Projects such as the China-Europe railway will improve the mobility and connection of Eurasia, which will help Europe exert more influence

⁹⁰ Michael A Peters, 'The ancient Silk Road and the birth of merchant capitalism (editorial)', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, volume 53:10, 2020.

⁹¹ Eom (n 78).

⁹² Nicola Casarini, 'When All Roads Lead to Beijing: Assessing China's New Silk Road and its Implications for Europe', *The International Spectator*, volume 51: 4, 2016, pp. 95-108.

in the Pacific region and greatly improve its international trade.⁹³

In the longer term, it helps to promote the regionalization and integration of the EU.⁹⁴ Though BRI cannot be compared with the EU in integration now, significant changes have been made. It is being increasingly regulated and the concept of “lean, clean, green” and the golden principles of “consultation, contribution and shared benefits” are widely accepted across the world⁹⁵ and promoting a new concept of global governance.⁹⁶ It also helps to spread the ideas of Europe and make it practical. The high standards of the EU do not work in some developing areas, where China helps to create conditions for its implementation so the EU can better play its role as a normative power. China’s proposal of “five connections” expands the scope of the “four major flows”.

The cooperation between China and BRI also follows the sequence of the spatial dimensions in the model. The closed region, the East Europe countries, is the front.⁹⁷ BRI upgrades the 17+1 cooperation between China and CEECs, which can be demonstrated by the Medium-Term Agenda for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries. Previously, the 17+1 cooperation is sub-regional, but BRI helps it become a trans-regional one by promoting its interconnection in land, air, ocean, and Internet. Now even North Africa and the Middle East can be linked to such a connection.⁹⁸ The fruits of such kind of interconnection are systematic and multiple. For example, the benefits of the Hungary-Serbia railway are beyond short-term economic benefits for these two countries. It is part of the land-sea express line from Piraeus across the Balkan peninsular to the core area in Europe.⁹⁹

On the other hand, it can interconnect European countries and narrow their inner development gaps. For example, now many products of EU transported from Rotterdam and Antwerp to countries in the East. Now with the harbour projects of BRI in Greece and Italy, the directions of trade can be more balanced. The projects such as the railway from Luxembourg to Zhengzhou have expanded Europe’s scope of influence. The four forms of transportation and communication (land, air, ocean, and internet) interconnection is essentially different from the current model. It upgrades

⁹³ Yuan Li, Kierstin Bolton & Theo Westphal, ‘The effect of the New Silk Road railways on aggregate trade volumes between China and Europe’ *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, volume 16: 3, 2018, pp. 275-92.

⁹⁴ Peter Ferdinand, ‘Westward ho-the China dream and ‘one belt, one road’: Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping’, *International Affairs*, volume 92: 4, 2016, pp. 941-57.

⁹⁵ Zhongzhou Peng & Sow Keat Tok, ‘The AIIB and China’s normative power in international financial governance structure’, *Chinese Political Science Review*, volume 1: 4, 2016, pp. 736-53.

⁹⁶ Anna Szeidovitz & Balázs Sárvári, ‘Political Economics of the New Silk Road,’ in Lihe Huang, Lilei Song & Yu Cheng (eds), *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena: Chinese and European Perspectives*, Springer Nature, Singapore, 2018, pp. 117-40.

⁹⁷ Astrid Pepermans, ‘China’s 16+1 and Belt and Road Initiative in Central and Eastern Europe: economic and political influence at a cheap price’, *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, volume 26: 2-, 2018, pp. 181-203.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Aris (n 68).

the regional integration to global interconnection, which will benefit more areas within and outside Europe.

The traditional model of globalization is led by a triangle where America is the drive, China is the application end by offering market, and Europe creates the norms.¹⁰⁰ However, the structure is damaged now. After the G7 summit, the German Chancellor said that “the times in which [Germany] could fully rely on others are partly over... We Europeans have to take our destiny into our own hands.”¹⁰¹ For Europe, China provides a new chance.¹⁰² Europe is in a prominent position in the industry chain, value chain, and supply chain of globalization. As BRI is pushing the centre of the world back to Eurasia, Europe again finds the possibility to play a role in the centre of the world, which is facilitated by Eurasia Bridge¹⁰³ and the 35 Eurasia Expresses.

BRI also creates a new possibility for globalization.¹⁰⁴ 23 EU countries, including thirteen countries in the 17+1 summit members, have signed various memorandums with China to enhance cooperation, such as the Siemens-CRRC cooperation and the financial investment memorandum between the Netherlands and China. It means that most EU countries have participated in BRI, which will bring about more cooperation in different areas between them.

The expected result of such cooperation is a sense of common identity. Bruno Maçães, Portugal's secretary of state for Europe, said in an article in the Financial Times, that “The artificial separation of Europe and Asia cannot hold in today's interconnected world ... There is only one way for Europe to escape its geopolitical trap: it too must embrace its Eurasian vocation.”¹⁰⁵

It reflects the welcome of the European elites for BRI and also the possibility of building a community of shared future for China and Europe.

Here we can find that China and Europe base GCSF on their common history and traditions. Then they make progress in the economy, especially infrastructure construction. East Europe countries, which are closer to China and developing countries in economy, are the primary partners for China to make an official declaration to build GCSF together.

Also, China cooperates with them separately at first, in forms such as third-party

¹⁰⁰ Vladimir Varnavsky, ‘Globalization And Structural Changes in The World Economy’, *Mironaya Ekonomika I Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, volume 63: 1, 2019, pp. 25-33.

¹⁰¹ Nick Allen & Rory Mulholland, ‘Europe can no longer rely on the US and UK, warns Merkel’, *The Telegraph*, England, 28 May 2017.

¹⁰² Casarini (n 90).

¹⁰³ The concept of the Eurasia Bridge was originally proposed by UNESCO and UNDP. There are three bridges in total. The first Eurasia Bridge linked Vladivostok and Rotterdam, the second Lianyungang and Rotterdam, the third Kunming and Rotterdam.

¹⁰⁴ Anastas Vangeli, ‘China's engagement with the sixteen countries of Central, East and Southeast Europe under the belt and road initiative’, *China and World Economy*, volume 25: 5, 2017, pp. 101-24.

¹⁰⁵ Bruno Macaes, ‘We are all Eurasian now’, *Financial Times*, London, 25 November 2015.

cooperation. Gradually, these projects are connected by platforms at higher levels. Finally, a higher level of integration can be achieved in Europe and closer relations can be created.

Discussion and Conclusion

Series of foreign policies under Xi Jinping's presidency have marked that China is going to abandon its over one hundred years of the approach of simply learning from the West.¹⁰⁶ Now China is exhibiting its world view and history view based on its own culture. It is trying to combine three things into a whole structure: the Chinese traditions, the Western traditions, and the Marxism traditions. Also, he tries to solve a paradox: If China always stresses that it does not interfere in the demonic affairs of others nations, then how can it claim that it needs to shoulder more international responsibilities?¹⁰⁷ Here, we see the role of GCSF. It is rebuilding the Chinese Communist Party from revolution to construction, from internationalism to globalism. Though now we cannot predict the result of such an attempt, its existence implies that we must examine China's foreign policy in a broader perspective than ever.

In this article, we propose a dynamic model of time, space, and logic to analyse the concept of GCSF comprehensively. We argue that GCSF links the Western and Chinese history and traditions, as well as the whole history of human beings. It is practical in reality and is future-oriented. It starts from the neighbouring areas of China and is extended to the developing countries firstly because they share a similar history and world-views with China. A community of shared future for mankind is the last stage of the whole process. Besides, it follows the logic of making them independent, connecting them, and making them coexist. To illustrate it, the examples of BRI and Europe are studied by the model. GCSF is the ultimate goal of BRI.¹⁰⁸ It is intended to create a new common identity of "we-ness" and new world civilization of Great Harmony.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Angela Poh & Mingjiang Li, 'A China in transition: The rhetoric and substance of Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping' *Asian Security*, volume 13: 2, 2017, pp. 84-97.

¹⁰⁷ Wang (n 56).

¹⁰⁸ Jinping (n 7).

¹⁰⁹ Wu (n 10).