CHINA'S NARRATIVE ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH: LEGACY OF CONFUCIANISM AND SINICIZATION OF MARXISM EXPLAINED

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Abstract: Positioned at the intersection of reason and reality, the paper examines China's Global Civilization Initiative as its key narrative on the Global South in contesting the hegemonic discourses of modernity and concomitant unipolar world order. Through a dialectical analysis, the paper argued how political economy architect, where China's diplomatic rhetoric is embedded, has been constructed through the synchronous inheritance of Confucianism with Sinicization of Marxism. The study, taking a tentative disenchantment stance, highlights the deconstruction and transcendence of entrenched dichotomies that splits modernity and tradition in political kaleidoscope, core and periphery in economic amphitheater, as well as civilization and "barbarism" in cultural panorama throughout the world. This penetrates every facets of China's narratives on "Global South". It goes without saying that such an demonstration must be succinct, not only due to the limited space here for analyzing such a complex process, but also because the author did not set out to present a historical account or exhaustive policy analysis.

Key Words: Global South; Global Civilization Initiative; Confucianism; Sinicization of Marxism

Introduction

For centuries, imaginaries of global space have been structured by numerous politico-geographical meta-categories centered on binaries such as modern/traditional, core/periphery, primitive/advanced, and donor/recipient, which are fundamentally tied to the distinction between Self and Other. As a robust discourse challenging this binary-based framework, the concept of the Global South, whose preliminary outlines were sketched in the second half of the 20th century, signifies a shift from a parochial focus on development or cultural difference toward a universal emphasis on geopolitical relations of power. It transcends mere geographical boundaries and ideological divisions, encapsulating a critique of global inequalities and power imbalances while underscoring the shared experiences of colonial exploitation and the increasingly assertive demand for eco-political autonomy among historically subordinate groups. Representing over 70% of the world's population and contributing approximately 45% of global GDP, the collective influence of these nations is indisputable. This rising prominence is exemplified by the establishment of organizations like BRICS, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, and CEMAC, which embody a shared aspiration to counter Western hegemony and foster collaboration within the Global South. The surge in South- South trade, from $2.3 trillion in 2007 to $5.6 trillion in 2023, further underscores this transformative shift.

Since WWII, countries in the South acted first as "rebels", then "responsive participants" and now "active agents"[1] within the system. While this positive identity transition is occurring, the

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steep rise in references to the "Global South" in analyses of world politics is a rather recent phenomenon that warrants a closer examination of its empirical foundations and conceptual implications, following a long period of collective silence in global rhetorical discourse. This incongruity is evident within the weighted voting systems of the United Nations Security Council and global financial institutions such as the IMF. With its rise prompting a dramatic recalibration of the global balance of power, China is increasingly advocating for the evolution of the term 'Global South', from its initial use as a metaphor for socio-economic marginality, to its later role as a justification for development or cultural diversity, and finally to its current function as an appeal for multipolarization in geopolitical power relations.

Considering these elements, the paper aims to contribute a gap in academic literature related to the genesis of China's Narrative on the Global South through lens of Confucianism legacies and Sinicization of Marxism. The paper is structured in six parts: following the introduction, the second section outline the origin and evolution of the concept Global South, highlighting its nature as a relational category to encourage the coordination of discrete interests and as a meta category for making sense of empirical convergence of actions; the second section elaborate the contents and implications of the Global Civilization Initiative, as its key narrative on the Global South in contesting the hegemonic discourses of modernity and concomitant unipolar world order. The forth, fifth and sixth sections trace the establishment of China's political economy architect, where its diplomatic rhetoric dwells in, has been constructed in three phase through the synchronous inheritance of Confucianism with Sinicization of Marxism. This dialectical analysis attaches much importance to the deconstruction and transcendence of the entrenched dichotomy that splits modernity and tradition in political kaleidoscope, core and periphery in economic amphitheater, as well as civilization and "barbarism" in cultural panorama throughout the world. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief summary.

Origins of "Global South" and Its Resurgence

Clearly defining the "Global South" has never been a straightforward task. This terminology chronologically arose from the resistant imaginary towards colonialism and imperialism historically inflicted by the Global North, functioned as an organizing principle to overhaul inequalities embedded in the neocolonialist global order, and also represents an allegorical application of categories to name patterns of development across the world. The evolution of this concept reflect the persistent rectification towards "the history of social science is strewn with proposals for the marriage of geography and politics to wrest monolithic nation-states as the unit of analysis in comparative research"[2], which "met with severe criticism due to their simplistic representations and ahistorical character of the analysis".[3]

In 1950s, Western analysts depicted the global entities as broken into taxonomic "Three Worlds" system[4] which was a shorthand of mapping the various players that include the "First World" including the United States and other NATO-aligned countries, the "Second World"

[1] Zhou, G.Y. (2024). Rise of Global South and changes in contemporary international order. *China International Strategy Review*, 6, 58-77

[2] Wellhofer, E. S. (1989). Core and Periphery: Territorial Dimensions in Politics. *Urban Studies*, 26(3), 340-355.

[3] Cox, K. R. and Reynolds, D . R. (1974). Locational Approaches to Power and Conflict. In *Locational Approaches to Power and Conflict*. New York: Wiley, pp. 19-42.

[4] See Palieraki, E. (2023). The Origins of the 'Third World': Alfred Sauvy and the Birth of a Key Global Post-War Concept. *Global Intellectual History*, 10(1), 23-52.

consisting of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact satellites, and the "Third World" encompassing of impoverished and neutral countries, many only recently emancipated from their colonial masters. This tripartite categorization provided the historical context that underpins the way scholars and politicians describe the global power distribution in Cold War. The origins of this saying are complicated, but scholars typically credit it to French anthropologist and historian Alfred Sauvy, who coined the neologism "Third World" in the paper *Three Worlds, One Planet* in 1952. Today, the advanced economies of the West are still occasionally referred to as the "First World", while the term "Second World" has basically fallen out of use after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. "Third World" remains its most original designations, but its meaning has shifted from the "neutral" connotation to a umbrella terminology for the developing world.

Throughout 1960s, critics of orthodox economics advocated for reforms in the global trade system and introduced the North-South framework into the lexicon of international relations. During the colonial era, Northern powers systematically extracted resources and wealth from Southern regions, often to the detriment of local populations. This exploitation has left a legacy of underdevelopment and poverty in numerous areas within the South. Following decolonization, Northern countries continued to maintain imbalanced trade relationships with their Southern counterparts, thereby perpetuating economic disparities between these two regions. The North established a global economic system that prioritized its own interests while erecting barriers to trade and economic development for Southern nations. Furthermore, many countries in the South have faced conflict and instability, which have significantly impeded their economic growth and development. Concurrently during this period, World System theorist Immanuel Wallerstein developed binary concepts such as "core" and "periphery," positing that the global economy is not merely a collection of separate national economies but rather a single integrated hierarchical structure wherein developed countries (the core) dominate and exploit less-developed nations (the periphery) for labor and raw materials; intermediate semi-peripheral countries serve as buffer zones. Semi-peripheral nations exhibit a mix of advanced and underdeveloped economic sectors; they may engage in both exploiting peripheral countries while also being exploited by core nations. Consequently, core countries do not face unified opposition from these semi-peripheral states. North-South framework and Core-Periphery model both resonate with earlier 20th century intellectual tradition of territorial analysis in politics that: (1) depicts the global order as constructed by wealthy and politically influential countries that establish their dominance through the economic exploitation of other regions; (2) fails to adequately consider the cultural, social, and historical dynamics that shape development; and (3) neglects the agency and initiatives of local communities and governments in fostering development. Numerous political theorists, including J. A. Hobson, Vladimir Lenin, Antonio Gramsci and Du Bois[5], helped to bring about this tradition.

In 1969, at the height of the Vietnam War, American New Left activist Carl Oglesby perceived pejorative usages of "Third World" and "periphery" that connotes backwardness, and firstly coined the neologism "Global South", which constitutes the core of "North and South" framework, as a more neutral and appealing synonym in Catholic journal *Commonweal*. Oglesby's work had inspired many governments of countries then considered part of the Global

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[5] See *Imperialism*(1902) by J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) by Vladimir Lenin, *The Southern Question*(1926) by Antonio Gramsci, *Worlds of Color*(1925) by Du Bois, etc.

South to reshape the global order. This agenda had two main objectives, often pursued along separate diplomatic tracks: asserting geopolitical nonalignment and demanding a structural overhaul of the world economy. The main multilateral platforms created to achieve these goals, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77), persist to this day.

Since Oglesby's venerable innovation and before the end of the Cold War, the term was used occasionally in parallel with "Third World" and then witnessed its popularization after the publishing of *North-South: A Programme for Survival,* also known as The Brandt Report, authored in 1980 by a committee led by German Social Democrat Willy Brandt. The report put forward a latitudinal line 30 degrees north of the Equator to visualize the socioeconomic gulf that separate wealthy and poorer countries based upon per-capita GDP, with some notable exceptions[6]. This trend of popularization emerged concurrently with the classification of nations into "developed," "developing," and "undeveloped" categories, a system that sorts the world into distinct segments along analogous lines with each country occupying a distinct position on the spectrum of development; nevertheless, the latter "Three Categories" system being more acceptable.

With the Cold War winding down, there was groundswell of criticism that "Three Worlds" system, "Three Categories" system and Core-Periphery model, compared with North-South framework, posits a mechanistic and linear trajectory of development, wherein the nations of the Global South are perceived as less evolved than their counterparts in the Global North. It implies that these southern countries could enhance their own progress by emulating the practices and structures characteristic of northern nations. The term "Global South" has experienced a resurgence in prominence, evolving into an essential component of the conceptual lexicon employed to elucidate the complexities of global politics at large and international development in particular. It has incrementally overtaken "Third World", "Periphery" or "developing world" as the frame of strategic choice for academic engagement with concrete realities in low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America, "marking a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference toward an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power".[7] A meta-analysis examining the prevalence of the term "Global South" within academic journal keywords reveals a striking trajectory: it was employed merely once in 1994, surged to 30 instances by 2005, and astonishingly exceeded 2,300 occurrences in 2024. This data illustrates an almost exponential escalation in its usage. References to the 'Global South' have become increasingly prominent in both academic and policy debates. Proponents of the North-South framework contend that it does not elevate the Global North above the Global South. Instead, they assert that the term "Global South" encapsulates a postcolonial solidarity among southern nations, united by their shared experiences of subjugation within the contemporary landscape of global capitalism. Critics hold that the system inadequately captures the diversity in governing systems, economic circumstances, strategic alignments, and cultural identities across the Global South, or in other words, a rigid grouping of nations. Such critiques, however,

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[6] From a purely geographic perspective, the map left much to be desired, since many nations designated as "southern," India among them, lie entirely in the Northern Hemisphere, while others such as "northern" Australia and New Zealand are located below the equator.

[7] Dados, N. & Connell, R. (2012). The Global South. *Contexts*, 11(1), 12-13.

should not obscure the term's enduring political significance and its symbolic resonance more than half a century after the phrase was first coined.

Since 2020, a series of significant international events, including the intensifying US-China trade disputes, Brexit, the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the Israel-Palestine tensions, have accelerated the transformation of the global order. For many in the Global South, the notion of 'Pax Americana' appears increasingly illusory in a world marked by ongoing conflicts, economic challenges, forced migration, environmental crises, and political repression, all exacerbated by inadequate local and global representation. Outside of the Euro-Atlantic space, the 'American Peace' represents an oxymoron[8]. The emergence and expansion of the BRICS alliance; the booming China's Belt and Road Initiative proposing economic cooperation with mostly developing nation-states; the growing influence of Russia and its proxy Wagner Group on political, economic, and military activities in some African states. The New Development Bank has risen to prominence, aspiring to strategically mobilize resources predominantly for the Global South. Meanwhile, rising economic powers like India, Turkey, and Brazil have assumed more substantial roles in international affairs, signaling a shift towards multipolarity. All provide an alternative to US-led initiatives. Indeed, actors from the Global South are embracing multipolarity and resisting a unipolar Euro-Atlantic hegemony. It is therefore unsurprising that most nations within the 'Global South' have refrained from endorsing the emerging narrative of "autocracies versus democracies" that occasionally permeates Western discourse. As Dicken outlines clearly, "the contours of the well-being map reveal a landscape of staggeringly high clusters of affluence and deep troughs of poverty and deprivation interspersed with plains of greater or lesser degrees of prosperity".[9] With expanding economic power and growing political clout, the Global South has transitioned from being a long-debated concept to a pivotal foreign policy position embraced by a diverse array of nations. These countries are striving to dismantle the inequitable frameworks of the global economy, strategically recalibrate their alliances, and foster the emergence of a more multipolar world order.

In summary, as a relational category[10], the Global South can be thought of as a dynamic aggregate of separate "vectors" that does not have a central command, being thus formed by a variety of discourses and actors instead of a static cohort of geographically classified entities in Westphalian sense. It draws focus to links between sites and across time, such as entrenched patterns of inequality. This inequality presents a broad category, which calls into question political, economic, historical, identity and epistemic factors.[11] In so doing, it underscores the imperative to contemplate (post)colonial and (post)imperial trajectories when elucidating the contemporary contours of the world system. As meta category for making sense of empirical phenomena[12], the Global South should also not be viewed solely through the filter of "underdevelopment" or as a general replacement for "outdated" concepts, but is forming a key

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[8] Danielle, T. S. (2024, Jun. 30). Inflection Points: Pax Americana at a Crossroad. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. https://gjia. georgetown.edu/2024/06/30/inflection-points-pax-americana-at-a-crossroad/

[9] Dicken, P. (2011). Global shift: mapping the changing contours of the world economy. New York: Guilford Press, p476.

[10] Tripathi, S. (2021). International relations and the 'Global South': from epistemic hierarchies to dialogic encounters. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(9), 2039-2054.

[11] Abbondanzieri, C. (2024), About Actors of The Global South: Trajectories, Continuities, and Futures. *Foro internacional*, 64(2), 335-369.

[12] Haug, S., Braveboy-Wagner, J. & Maihold, G. (2021). The 'Global South' in the Study of World Politics: Examining A Meta Category. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(9), 1923-1944. Bailey, K. (1994). Typologies and Taxonomies in Social Science. In *Typologies and Taxonomies*, 1–16. London: SAGE.

swing vote in global affairs by weighing in on issues in the matter of integration and provision of equal opportunity to citizens of the world in its current trajectory. Self-confidence is essential before the Global South can unshackle themselves from the holistic subjugation imposed by their former Western colonial masters and latter unipolar Euro-Atlantic system. This natural response requires more assertive approaches to bring their voices up. Considering the consolidation of China as an indispensible actor politically and identity-wise belonging to Global South, it goes without saying that Global Development/ Security/Civilization Initiatives put forward by China stand out as inspiring rhetoric devices to represent interests and expectations of all "vectors" in this fraternity.

Moreover, it is the Global Civilization Initiative, rather than the other two counterparts, that constitutes the crux for articulating China's narratives vis-a-vis the Global South, owing to two pivotal factors. For one thing, the sequentiality of their emergence[13] necessarily imbues the most recent initiative enhanced descriptive, explanatory and predictive capabilities, since it comprehensively addresses the increasingly complex and evolving requirements and ambitions of the Global South as a potent enabler to both development and security imperatives. For another, from a systemic perspective[14], Global Civilization Initiative act as a bridge among the "Three Initiatives", facilitating practical and effective communication channels that support the execution of both the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, which respectively acts as a cornerstone lays a robust material foundation for the implementation and a safeguard to ensure a peaceful and stable external environment.

Global Civilization Initiative: A Blueprint Transcending Ideological Universalism

Civilization has played a indispensable role in shaping human societies, each contributing to the rich tapestry of global culture. The word "civilization" is derived from the Latin word "*civis*", which, as opposite to barbarianism, means citizen and applies to those living in one social and political order. It is the highest cultural grouping sharing the same beliefs, races, ethnicities, norms, values, institutions, and historical origins, and is an oldest form of human social order[15] which arises from the progression of human practices and serves as the collective memory for its people. Rooted in the distinctive context of their existence, civilizations encapsulate the profound wisdom and spiritual aspirations of a nation or ethnic group, manifesting their intrinsic value while cultivating modern yet intricately woven political, economic, and social institutions.[16]

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[13] Global Development Initiative was made by President Xi Jinping in his remarks at the general debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) via video on Sept 21, 2021; Global Security Initiative was proposed by him at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2022 on Apr. 21, 2022; Global Civilization Initiative was raised by him in the World Political Parties High-level Meeting at Beijing on March 15, 2023.

[14] Zeng, X.H. & Tian, J.L. (2024). The Intrinsic Connection between the "Three Initiatives" and Their Global Significance. *Teaching and Research*, (4), 82-90.

[15] Rabie, M. (2023). Culture and Civilization. In *A Future Economy for All: Creating a Free, Just, and Sustainable Economic Future* (pp. 27-31). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland; Buzan, B. & Zhang, F. (2024). Multiple Modernities in Civilizational Perspective: An Assessment of the Global Civilization (s) Initiative. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 17(1), 104-126; Huntington, S. P. (1996). The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon and Schuster.

[16] Suleiman, K. U. (2016). Civilization: History, Description, Common Characteristics and Importance. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 5 (3): 28-38.

In Western discourse, the term "civilization" is rarely utilized outside of self-referential contexts, particularly in relation to the ancestral homelands of biblical narratives, as well as ancient Greece and Rome. Although these regions are acknowledged as foundational, it is argued that civilization reached its zenith first in imperial England and subsequently in the United States of America. Meanwhile, Eurocentrism has been variously characterized as a conceptual paradigm or an assemblage of empirical convictions that position Europe as the preeminent architect and catalyst of world history, the custodian of universal values and rational thought, and the pivotal force of global civilization. This perspective not only denies the historical agency and developmental potential of colonized regions but also perpetuates a narrative of European superiority. Eurocentrism transcends mere ethnocentric bias, as it is deeply intertwined with and constituted through the violence and asymmetry of colonial and imperial encounters.[17]. Under the pretext of Western civilization's superiority, non-Western nations were relegated to a state of dependency on the West, while their indigenous languages, cultures, religions, and governance systems were systematically discouraged or eradicated.

In World Political Parties High-level Meeting at Beijing on March 15, 2023, Chinese leader presented the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) in his keynote address[18]. It stands in concert with the previously unveiled Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI), forming a triumvirate of interrelated, albeit nebulous, concepts within the framework of the "Community of Common Destiny", which is posited as Beijing's counterproposal to Western-centric "rules-based international order". The GCI underscores the importance of respecting diversified history and tradition, and foregrounds principle of civilizational pluralism and the transcendence of "clash of civilizations" thesis popularized by Samuel Huntington in the post-Cold War era[19]. It argues that ideological universalism, when imposed without consent, constitutes a form of imperialism. It asserts that civilizations ought to refrain from imposing their own values or models upon others and from inciting ideological confrontations. Moreover, it underscores the notion that interactions among civilizations ought to be anchored in the tenets of equality, reciprocal learning, dialogue, and inclusivity. This civilizational transcendence invokes a compelling argument that there exists no singular alignment between any specific civilization and its corresponding modernization; rather, each civilization embarks on its own distinctive journey through the process of modernization, one that is deeply rooted in its unique historical narratives and cultural legacies.[20] This approach is profoundly enticing to those who assert their identity and resist the notion of becoming an isolated individual in a fully globalized "flat" world. Should one adopt the perspective that there exists but a singular paradigm of authentic modernity, namely, the Western model, or more precisely, the American variant, then the disparities among civilizations may be unjustly

[17] Sundberg, J. (2009). Eurocentrism. In Rob, K. & Nigel, T. eds. *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 638-643). Netherlands: Elsevier Science

[18] Xi, J.P. (2023, Mar. 15) "Join Hands on the Path Towards Modernization," Keynote Address by H. E. Xi Jinping General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and President of the People's Republic of China at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting. http://epaper.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202303/17/WS641393bca310777689887691.html.

[19] Samuel, P. H. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3): 22-49.

[20] Hsiung, J. C. (2012). Chinese Civilization: Origins and the Puzzle of Its Longevity and Renewal. In *China into Its Second Rise: Myths, Puzzles, Paradoxes, and Challenge to Theory*. World Scientific Publishing Co Pte Ltd; Fogel, J. A. (1988). The debates over the Asiatic mode of production in Soviet Russia, China, and Japan. The American Historical Review, 93(1), 56-79; Wittfogel, K. A. (2017). The hydraulic civilizations. In The Structure of Political Geography (pp. 442-449). Routledge.

characterized as mere vestiges of archaism and backwardness (for instance, as indicators of incomplete modernization).

While the GCI does not overtly contest the Western paradigm of a "rules-based international order (RIO) ", it has nonetheless encountered severe criticism from Western quarters, akin to the backlash faced by its two preceding initiatives. Numerous assertions have been made contending that the GCI is fundamentally flawed and indefensible, as it obscures the critical distinction between "democracies" and "autocracies", or "rule of law" and "rule of man", by emphasizing the importance of history, traditions and culture[21]; or its implementation could inadvertently reinforce cultural hegemony or economic dependency through transforming cultural and social elements into marketable assets, echoing Edward Said's critique of Orientalism and Frantz Fanon's analysis of postcolonial exploitation[22]. This reaction is disappointing but not surprising. Just as certain scholars have observed, RIO cannot obscure the inherent paradox that nation-states are inevitably predisposed to antagonism towards one another. They invariably perceive the ascendance of another's power through a lens of suspicion and trepidation; thus, the relentless competition among nation-states, so long as these political entities maintain this self-perception, will perpetually engender profound instability in their interrelations.[23] This weak version Thucydides's Trap in RIO, albeit often intentionally cloaked by contemporary western political narrative, can be traced through a synergistic effect coupled with ideological Eurocentrism in terms of civilization.

Here the critical point of this rhetorical debate rests in the backup logic or legitimacy (at least alleged by its proponents) of GCI. That is to say, how China connect the unbroken continuity of Chinese civilization with its contemporary social and political architect, testify the validity of so-called "path of socialism with Chinese characteristics" as its optimal choice in world modernization arena, and furthermore expand the tenet of "Community of Common Destiny" in its global governance scheme as an alternative to the "rules-based international order"? Marxism undoubtedly stands as the most pivotal element within Western intellectual tradition, having forged a profound opportunity for an enriching philosophical dialogue with Chinese heritage in contemporary times.[24] In other words, GCI'S success depends on reconciling the contradictions and challenges inherent in balancing socialist principles with the dynamics of global capitalism. To address these questions, the subsequent sections employ an integrated approach synchronically investigating the interplay between inheritance of Confucianism and Sinicization of Marxism, while also diachronically tracing the evolution of the maturation of this cohesion in different domestic and international contexts.

"League of Proletarians of All Nations" in International Liberation Movement:
Legacies of Confucianism in The 1ˢᵗ Phase of Sinicization of Marxism

In ancient China, Confucianism played a dominant philosophy in shaping the values and beliefs of the ruling class and was instrumental in sculpting the political and social structure of its

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[21] Andrey, K. (2024, Mar. 14). Unpacking GCI: China's strategic vision comes of age. *Global Times*. https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/ 202403/ 1308833.shtml; Carty, A., & Gu, J. (2021). Theory and Practice in China's Approaches to Multilateralism and Critical Reflections on the Western 'Rules-Based International Order'. *IDS Research Report*.

[22] Shakeel, A. (2025, Jan. 1). The Politics of China's Global Civilization Initiative. *Modern Diplomacy*. https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025 /01/01/the-politics-of-chinas-global-civilization-initiative/.

[23] Bai, T. (2020). Against Political Equality: The Confucian Case, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

[24] Tian, C.S. (2019). Mao Zedong, Sinicization of Marxism, and Traditional Chinese Thought Culture. *Asian Studies*, 7(1): 13-37.

society. Confucianism in its essence denotes an all-inclusivist and transethnic nature. In a macroscopic view, its emphasis on moral virtue, filial piety, and social harmony continues to resonate in Chinese culture to this day[25]. Hsiung (2012) has summed up three categories of factors that contribute to the longevity of Sinic civilization: ecological factors, cultural-religious and institutional factors, and sequentiality of certain developmental stages in history[26]. One cannot evaluate the enduring nature of a civilization in isolation, nor can it be appraised independently of its historical context. Although civilization and history are not interchangeable concepts, they are intricately intertwined in a profound manner. To extend Hsiung's interpretation, theories of Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) and Hydraulic Society Hypothesis (HSH) can shed further lights on the longevity of Confucianism, which offers a starting point to analyze uninterrupted continuance of China's political philosophy in different stages centering on important topics such as the regime design since the founding of Communist Party of China (CPC), the modernization path choice with inadequate representation in unipolar Euro-Atlantic global institutions, and its diplomatic strategy to construct a more inclusive world order.

AMP is a concept proposed by Karl Marx to elucidate a distinctive form of pre-capitalist society that flourished in ancient civilizations throughout Asia, notably in regions such as China and India. In the Preface to his seminal work, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in 1859, Marx articulated a comprehensive reflection on the trajectory of human history: "In broad outline, the asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society."[27] AMP is characterized by a collective stewardship and governance of land and labor via a system of taxation or tribute, a communal basis instead of an individual one on which means of production and human labor are harnessed, and a robust central state that played a vital role in both economic and social spheres. Latter on, Karl Wittfogel evidently referred to AMP, coined the terminology "hydraulic society" for China and then put forth the theory of "Oriental despotism," stemming from what he described as the Chinese rice culture. This argument can be thought as a genetic explanation of those traits of AMP. It asserted that for the extensive irrigation of the rice paddies, strictly coordinated management of limited irrigational water resources was required, sometimes involving the coercion of bureaucratic network.[28] Hence, this rice culture spawned the tradition of a exceptionally powerful government and an absolutist managerial culture in the tapestry of Chinese civilization. Bearing resemblance to AMP, in hydraulic societies power in all its manifestations resided firmly within the grasp of the agro-managerial bureaucracy who controlled these hydraulic states, there was virtually no notion of private land, and any entrepreneurial endeavors led by the affluent class were invariably subordinated to the interests of monarch. In another perspective,

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[25] Russell, B. (1996) The China Problem (p. 30). Translated by Yue, Q. Shanghai: Xuelin Press; Hegel, G. W. F. (1963). Lectures on the History of Philosophy (Vol. 1, p.137). Kitchener: Batoche Books.

[26] Hsiung, J. C. (2012). Chinese Civilization: Origins and the Puzzle of Its Longevity and Renewal. In *China into Its Second Rise: Myths, Puzzles, Paradoxes, and Challenge to Theory* (pp.5-13). World Scientific Publishing Co Pte Ltd.

[27] Marx, K. (1859). A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. In *Marx Engels Collected Works* (Vol. 29). New York: International Publishers, 1859/1988, p. 263.

[28] Chowdhury, A. R. & Rajhans, S. K. (2021). Revisiting Wittfogel:"Hydraulic Society" in Colonial India and Its Post-colonial Legacies in Hydropower Management. In *Theory, Policy, Practice* (pp. 123-140). Routledge India.

the formation of despotic centralization involves arithmetic subsistence resources supply growth and exponential population growth[29] in ancient hydraulic societies. This correlation breeds and in turn defends by the Sinic civilization. The Confucian concept of the Mandate of Heaven (*Tianming outlook*) legitimize a unparalleled authority of monarch over all, presiding over a teleological order that governs the cosmos. Mandate of Heaven connotes: moral virtue implies the observance of rituals and social norms (*Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues*)[30] that maintain authoritarian and patriarchal hierarchy; filial piety is not only a philosophical idea, but also a practical rule of ordinary ethics referred to the relationship between the inferior and the superior, and further an advanced ethics from within the family unit to a collective doctrine within imperial machinery; social harmony emphasizes geographic expansion of Sinic civilization rely more on cultural assimilation than on military conquest or political coercion.

In the complex tapestry of Chinese dynastic cycles, the ascendant dynasty predominantly inherited the institutional framework and governing ethos of its predecessor rather than implementing a complete overhaul. The state-sponsored adoption of Confucianism as a common belief system contributes a lot to this continuance.

From May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the victory of War of Liberation in 1949, CPC has established the tenet of localizing Marxism through critically inheriting the Confucian philosophical and ethical legacies, instead of treating it as written in stone. Fu Wei-hsun has tentatively summarized up distinct traits of Confucianism that have been absorbed into Mao Tse-tung's "sinified Marxism"[31]. Firstly, the pseudo-dialectical interpretation of the Way of Heaven (*Tiandao*) in terms of Yin-Yang interaction, as presented in *The Book of Changes* (*Yi-jing*) and Taoist metaphysics, undoubtedly facilitated Mao's intellectual assimilation of dialectical materialism. Secondly, Mao's perception of human nature is grounded in the Confucian conviction of the inherent goodness and malleability of mankind, Marx's analysis of social classes, and his extensive practical experience of managing people; modern scientific investigations into human nature have rarely piqued his interest. Thirdly, the altruistic (other-oriented) and pre-collectivistic (family-centric) inclinations inherent in Confucian morality have profoundly shaped the development of Mao's Marxist mindset, leading to his relative disinterest in Western notions of alienation and individual freedom. Fourthly, the Confucian principle of the unity of knowledge and action greatly aided Mao in embracing a similar doctrine in Marxism-Leninism; his aversion to rote learning and adherence of the practical implementation of Marxism-Leninism were profoundly shaped by the pragmatic approach to education of Confucian thought. Furthermore, the Confucian method of moral cultivation through continuous self-reflection, mutual advice and the equal teacher-student relationship

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[29] Malthus assumed that "food is necessary to the existence of man" and the "power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man". See in Artzrouni, M., & Komlos, J. (1985). Population growth through history and the escape from the Malthusian trap: A homeostatic simulation model. *Genus*, 21-39.

[30] The Three Cardinal Bonds and Five Constant Virtues have been a recurrent theme in many works, including the Three-Character Classic, a text for children. The Three Cardinal Bonds, namely "a monarch guides his subjects, a father guides his children, and a husband guides his wife", stressed the absolute superiority and authority of those who guided over those who were guided. The Five Constant Virtues referred to benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity.

[31] Fu, C. W. H. (1974). Confucianism, Marxism-Leninism and Mao: a critical study. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 1(3-4), 339-371..

(*Docendo discimus*), were adapted into Mao's "thought reform" methodology with Marxist revisions. Consequently, both Confucian introspective tenets and the Leninist-Stalinist practice of "criticism and self-criticism" were intricately woven into Mao's ideological transformation process. Fifth, the Confucian political ideal of "the World of Great Unity" bears a striking resemblance to the Marxist "higher phase of Communism." Both Confucianists and Marxist-Leninists, including Mao, converge on the idea that once their respective political ideals are fully realized, authentic morality in everyday life transcends mere compliance with rules and evolves into an ingrained habit, as genuine humanity is cultivated through moral transformation. However, Mao aligns more closely with Confucianists in emphasizing daily cultivation over the Marxist theory of spontaneous self-transformation following economic emancipation.

Mao's revolutionary thought also breeds the outward outlook of the "league of proletarians of all nations" in terms of stressing on dealing with four relationships. Firstly, the relationship between the international character of the proletarian revolutionary cause and its national specificity in practice. The proletarian revolution is inherently an international endeavor, and the global socialist movement necessitates mutual support among the proletariat of all nations. However, each country's national conditions vary significantly. To achieve this cause, the proletariat and their political parties must accurately assess and understand these conditions, integrating the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism with the specific practices of their own revolutions. They must rely on their own revolutionary forces and people to successfully advance their revolutionary endeavors. Secondly, the balance between self-reliance and seeking foreign assistance. In populous yet underdeveloped Eastern countries, both revolution and construction must be grounded in national realities, finding a path suited to local conditions, and leveraging the wisdom and strength of the populace to achieve goals. However, isolationism is not viable; it is essential to seek foreign aid without engaging in blind exclusion. Thirdly, maintaining the balance between national pride and confidence and learning from abroad. As a great Eastern country with over 5000 years of civilization, we must uphold our national pride and confidence when facing any powerful or wealthy nation, rejecting any servile or submissive behavior. Simultaneously, we should learn from advanced practices abroad that benefit us, which will not only preserve our self-esteem but also enable significant progress through the absorption of foreign strengths. Fourth, adhering to the principle of independence while respecting others' choices. We insist on independently choosing our revolutionary paths while respecting other countries' rights to choose their own paths. We uphold true internationalism and oppose hegemonism.

In a nutshell, this period, which signified the 1st phase of the Sinicization of Marxism, has witnessed a dialectical synthesis between Marxism-Leninism (an imported ideology) and Confucian ethical humanism (a native tradition). This elucidates why Mao's Thought has become a powerful ideological tool that inspires numerous nationalist revolutionaries in the Third World.

"Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" in World Modernization Arena: Post-Confucianism in The 2nd Phase of Sinicization of Marxism

The revitalization of Confucianism stands as one of the most significant theoretical currents in contemporary Sinicization of Marxism in context of modernity path debates, quite different to aforementioned revolutionary discourse. This symbiosis, before effectuated in mainland China, firstly finds its theoretical legitimacy in the rectification of ostracism between tradition and

modernity in development narrative, and then gains its verification by economic miracle of East Asian societies that belongs to Confucian cultural cluster.

Modernization theory delineates development as a singular evolutionary trajectory that all societies undergo a transformation, evolving from agrarian, rural, and traditional frameworks to postindustrial, urbanized, and contemporary paradigms.[32] During the 1950s and 1960s, development experts expressed a pessimistic outlook regarding the economic future of the East Asian, particularly in regions profoundly influenced by Chinese cultural heritage. Sociologists, under Weber's influence[33], thought modernity as the antithesis of tradition, and anticipated development to arise solely from the introduction of Western "Protestant" values and the elimination of "traditional" cultural barriers to progress. Western sinologists continued to discuss Confucianism as a factor in China's failure to change and modernize in recent centuries. This supposition appears terribly simplifying. As stated by Huntington, "It is false to believe that tradition and modernity are 'mutually exclusive'. Modern society is not simply modern; it is modern and traditional. The attitudes and behavior patterns may in some cases be fused; in others, they may comfortably coexist […]. In addition, one can go further and argue not only that coexistence is possible but that modernization itself may strengthen tradition. It may give new life to important elements of the pre-existing culture, such as religion."[34] Galland and Yannick has empirically demonstrated the connection of purported persistency of traditional values despite eco-political changes in European society, asserting that "attachment to a religious identity as a fundamental determinant of value orientations".[35]

Nevertheless, the East Asian economic boom during the 1970s and 1990s surprised many observers. Western scholars began to reassess some of their positions and investigate the cultural affinities between Confucianism and the cultural dimensions that contribute the growth epoch of Four Asian Tigers (South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan region).[36] This period also marked the emergence of the "Neo-Confucianism" and "post-Confucian hypothesis" praised for their "superiority" or, at least, as the Asian equivalent of Weber's "protestant ethic". The futurologist Kahn first confirmed a direct correlation between traditional values of these neo-Confucian countries and their economic success.[37] MacFarquhar subsequently drew attention to the "post-Confucian challenge" that East Asian posed to the West.[38] Slightly later, Berger articulated his concept of "Vulgar Confucianism," positing that certain values rooted in Confucian thought permeate East Asian societies, thereby facilitating

[32] Ynalvez, M.A., Shrum, W.M. (2015). Science and Development. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Second Edition, pp. 150-155). Elsevier.

[33] In his monumental work, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism,* Max Weber ([1904– 1905] 2001) offers a cultural and ethical theory of the interplay between capitalism and formal institutions.

[34] Huntington, S. P. (1971). The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics. *Comparative Politics*, 3(3), 283-322.

[35] Galland, O. & Lemel, Y. (2006) . Tradition vs. Modernity : The Continuing Dichotomy of Values in European Society. Revue française de sociologie, Vol. 47(4), 687-724.

[36] See Berger, P. L. (2024). An East Asian Development Model?. In *In search of an East Asian development model* (pp. 3-11). Routledge; Wang, H., & Karl, R. E. (1998). Contemporary Chinese thought and the question of modernity. *Social text*, (55), 9-44; Lee, H. J. (2003). Development, crisis and Asian values. *East Asian Review,* 15(2), 27-42; Kwon, K. (2007). Economic development in East Asia and a critique of the post-Confucian thesis. *Theory and Society*, 36, 55-83.

[37] Kahn, H. (1979). World Economic Development: 1979 and Beyond (pp.121-123). Boulder: Westview Press.

[38] MacFarquhar, R. (1980). The post-Confucian challenge. The economist, (9), 67-72.

economic advancement.[39] Explicitly finding traditional potentials that drive (at least partly) this economic boom entails substantial reexamination of classical Confucian texts conducted by western and East Asian Sinologists. For example, capitalism has consistently credited profit as the cornerstone of prosperity and an indispensable element of civilized modern existence, and positioned at the intersection of reason and practical life, highlighted the spirit of contract as well as philanthropy to be powerful catalysts for positive change and social equality. According to Yu Tzong-shian (1983), passages found in the Analects (*Lunyu*) and Master Meng (*Mengzi*) that delineate the distinction between "profit" (*li*) and "rightness" (*yi*) should not be construed as an indication that Masters Kong and Meng were opposed to profit itself. Rather, their stance was one of disapproval towards profits acquired through unethical means. Specifically, *li* covers economic profit other benefits, such as honor, reputation, power, etc., and is more related to people's external well-being[40]; *yi* refers to equality in distribution of wealth, the conformity of behavior to ethical morality, and political connotation of benevolent governance. Not only did early Confucians exhibit a openness to moral "profit," or "self interest" (*zili*), but their writings also provide compelling evidence that ancient China possessed a sophisticated understanding of private property.[41] The sociologist Wong Siu-Iun (1986) has listed four Confucian elements, "incorporative cosmology, high achievement motivation, familism, and utilitarian discipline" as consisting of cultural ethos intricately intertwined with Hong Kong industrial prosperity.[42] John C. H. Fei (1989) assessed the potentials of traditional Chinese values in modern growth with regards to secularism, nationalism and egalitarianism[43]. Secularism refers to Confucianism as a school of philosophy or ethical system, rather than a religion, focusing on individual' behaviors (its core concepts include Benevolence[*ren*], Wisdom[*zhi*], Propriety[*li*], Righteousness[*yi*], Trustworthiness[*xin*],) and responsibilities in society to achieve social harmony and stability through the cultivation of human virtues; nationalism represents transformation of "Filial Piety" (*xiao*) and "Loyalty" (*zhong*) as the socialization of personal existence to the legitimacy of national rule and belonging identity; egalitarianism indicates the belief of social justice based on the notion that individual in question is not merely a solitary entity, but rather a social being intricately woven into the fabric of a complex social structure with meritocracy or proportional equality.

The eminent growth miracle of Four Asian Tigers unprecedentedly inspired mainland China which has been painfully caught in the religious vacuum and economic stagnation in the 1960s and 1970s. The popularity of the Confucian capitalism theory used to explain neighboring growth epoch was taken as the primary triggering agent for mainland China to shift the country from its unsteady early economic trajectory, based on planned economy model of the Soviet Union, to a more sustainable market-oriented path. China's transformation is not a simple rehearsal of the evidenced formula "Confucian culture+Western catalyst=economic growth",

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[39] Berger, P. L. (1988). An East Asian Development Model?. In *In search of an East Asian development model* (pp. 3-11). New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

[40] Zhu, C.Q & Yang, T.T. (2024). Origin of Common Prosperity from China's Excellent Traditional View of Righteousness and Interests. Economic Review, (2), 14-22.

[41] Yu, T.S. (1983). Influence of Chinese Culture on Taiwan's Economic Growth. In *Economic Development in Taiwan and Hong Kong* (p. 4). Taipei: Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica.

[42] Wong, S.L. (1986). Modernization and Chinese Culture in Hong Kong. China Quarterly, (106), 306-325.

[43] Fei, John C.H. (1989). Chinese Cultural Values and Industrial Capitalism. In *Conference on Confucianism and Economic Development in East Asia*. Taipei: Chung-Hwa Institution, pp. 257-278.

but an upgraded version redefining "Modernity" that Chinese modernization should not be conflated with Westernization. The concept of "modernity" is no longer in opposition to 'tradition'; rather, traditions embody the fundamental essence of contemporary modernities. China's specific modernization model is underpinned by a robust state leadership with a sophisticated administrative structure, a stratified social hierarchy, familial bonds and an intricate web of social connections, and with strong emphasis on education. What contemporary Confucian philosophers instead criticize in Western Enlightenment models is their pronounced dependence on individualism and instrumental rationality, which are thought as excessively reductive.[44] In their perspective, these two 'fundamental pillars' of modernization are the architects of our estrangement from nature and the pervasive human alienation that characterizes post-capitalist societies, culminating in what is often referred to as a "vacuum of values". Contemporary Confucians have viewed modernization essentially as a rationalization of the world[45] to generate a non-individualistic interpretation of modernity. For them, the archetypal Confucian gentleman (*junzi*), who epitomized the harmonious integration of personal virtue (the inner sage) with a broader social ethics and a prosperous existence (the external ruler), presented an intriguing paradigm for navigating the intricate social complexities of the contemporary world; the remedy for the current global crisis lies in positioning ethics at the very heart of human concerns. The fundamental dilemmas of human existence cannot be adequately addressed through mere ethical, organizational, or contractual methodologies; instead, humanity must endeavor to uncover solutions that are deeply anchored in a profound individual consciousness regarding the significance of the ethical conditionality inherent in human life.

Alongside this economic system transformation from 1980s to 2000s is the 2nd phase of sinicization of Marxism which highlight "socialism with Chinese characteristics", tallying with the Marxist doctrine that economic foundation determines the superstructure. Common prosperity, one of the pillar elements in the ideology of socialism with Chinese characteristics, is epitomized as it represents the societal framework envisioned by Marx in the Communist Manifesto and beyond for the nascent phase of socialism.[46] According to Marx and Engels, as the productive forces continue to evolve, "production will aim at the prosperity of all"[47] emerges as a defining characteristic of the future society. The idea of common prosperity was first explicitly articulated in *Volume 46* of the *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, claiming "in the new social system, the rapid development of social productive forces will ensure that production aims at the prosperity of all people." In 1876, Engels further elaborated on this in his book "Anti-Dühring," stating that "the social ownership of means of production, followed by the socialization of production, can not only guarantee that all members of society enjoy a rich and increasingly abundant material life but also ensure ample freedom for their physical and mental development." Marx and Engels emphasized that in the future new society, built on highly developed productive forces, common prosperity serves as the production goal, with a

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[44] Tu, W.M. (2017). Implications of the rise of "Confucian" East Asia. In *Multiple modernities* (pp. 195-218). Routledge.

[45] Rošker, J. S. (2015). Modern Confucianism and Chinese Theories of Modernization. *Philosophy Compass*, 10(8), 510-522.

[46] Ross, J. (2022). Why Common Prosperity is Good for Socialism and for China's Economy. *World Review of Political Economy*, 13(1): 4-26.

[47] Marx/Engels Collected Works, Volume VIII, Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2009, p. 200.

commitment to achieving the comprehensive development of individuals. Under the socialist system, the fundamental principle of social distribution is predicated upon individual aptitude and the contributions rendered through one's labor. This principle embodies the tangible realization of socialist public ownership and reflects the socialist principle of material interests, which is one of the essential characteristics of socialism. However, it may not represent the most ideal distribution principle in human society[48]. From the perspective of productive forces development, China's experience since the reform and opening-up has demonstrated that the socialist market economy aligns with current productive forces requirements. The coexistence of multiple economic components necessitates a distribution system primarily based on labor contributions alongside various other distribution methods.

"Community of Common Destiny" vs. "Rules-Based International Order":
Concept of Pantisocracy in the 3rd Phase of Sinicization of Marxism

China's ascendant stature on the global stage has been accompanied not only by economic and military prowess, but also a variety of innovative concepts in its diplomatic lexicon declaring it increasing confidence in shaping regional order. Among them, "Community With a Shared Future for Mankind (CSF)" represents a umbrella reference of appeals and endeavors to leverage globalization, multipolarity, multilateralism and other types of global interdependence to reshape the international order. CSF advocates the transcendence all sorts of differences in human society and targets greatest possible benefits for all[49], claiming: (1) a "organic unity" based on respect for differences and individuality, instead of the "mechanical unity" that suppresses differences with identity and confronts particularity with universality; (2) a "global co-governance" model that international affairs are handled through consultation among all countries and equal participation of all countries in making rules, instead of the "vertical linear governance" model that solutions of international affairs reside in a hierarchical master-slave structure and solidified "center-periphery" pattern; and (3) a "inter-subjective thinking" that navigates a world teeming with differences and even oppositions in different national interests, religious beliefs, ideologies, and social systems instead of the "subject-object dichotomy" that stereotypes the world into two simple opposing poles of center and periphery, advanced and backward, civilized and barbaric, allies and enemies, democracy and autocracy, and West and non-West.

These tenets bear mutual corroborations with ancient Confucian philosophy of the ideal world. Thousands of years ago, China envisaged a pantisocracy (*datong shehui*) where people live in perfect harmony and are as dear to one another as family[50]. The properties of this pantisocracy was explicitly delineated in Rites and Their Function (*Liyun*), the ninth paper in The Book of Rites (*Liji*), as follows: the world, devoid of any class distinctions, is for all the people and right of management of community affairs resides in all its people; a harmonious interpersonal relation gives primacy to mutual trust, good-neighborly friendship and moral integrity; the people-oriented development accentuate value and dignity of every member of society; governance is realized through meritocracy on basis of their demonstrated abilities and virtue.

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[48] Hu, A., Zhou, S. (2024). Common Prosperity Theory Innovation (pp.31-51). In *China in 2035: Towards a Society of Common Prosperity for All*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

[49] Chen, S.G. (2023). Shared Future: How a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind Can Change the World? *Journal of Marxism*, (2), 49-60.

[50] Cui, D. (2009). Rational awareness of the ultimate in human life : The Confucian concept of "destiny." *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 4(3), 309-321.

There is also a theoretical lineage between CSF and Marxism. "Community", despite of its less popularity compared with other terms such as "ideology" and "surplus value", [51] is also a fundamental concept used by Marx in discussing the development of human society, reflecting the social nature of human beings. From a historical perspective, Marx's concept of community encompasses the initial "natural community," the "illusory community" represented by capitalist societies, and the "true community," which he defines as a "union of free people".[52] Beginning with humanity's departure from its primate ancestors, individuals have needed to harness collective strength and action to compensate for their inherent lack of self-defense capabilities in order to transcend their animalistic state during development. Consequently, through collaborative labor efforts, they coalesce into "natural communities" in forms such as clans or tribes. As productivity advances and division of labor emerges, workers become estranged from the very conditions that sustain their existence; thus, the relationship between laborers-who are both producers and owners of production tools-begins to disintegrate. Individuals find themselves liberated from natural communities; they detach from personal bonds and evolve into 'free individuals,' resulting in the dissolution of various small communities characteristic of pre-capitalist society. Under these circumstances, people enter what can be termed an "illusory community," epitomized by capitalist nations. However, this "illusory form of community" fails to represent the interests of all its members; rather it predominantly reflects those interests aligned with the ruling class. After critiquing numerous alienation phenomena engendered by capitalist structures, Marx posits that establishing a "true community" should serve as the ultimate value goal for this "union of free people." Nevertheless, transitioning from an "illusory community" to a "true community" is far from being a natural process. It is not only necessary to eliminate class oppression, capital control, private ownership, and division of labor restrictions that lead to alienation, but fundamentally requires highly developed productive forces as a guarantee. The 'true community' refers to the communist society in which humanity is liberated. To sum up, the notion of common interest serves as a fundamental lens through which Marx explains the emergence and evolution of communities, which breeds the current concept "Community" with a shared future for mankind. This intellectual achievement constitutes one of the prime examples in ideological system of the 3rd phase of sinicization of Marxism.

Viewing CSF as a competing alternative, the increased prevalence with which senior U.S. officials invoke the phrase "rules-based order" (RBO), firstly come up with come up U.S. President Obama in his 2015 National Security Strategy and then accentuated by his successor President Biden, has not gone unnoticed, provoking responses from various international stakeholders and igniting discourse within the scholarly realms of international relations. RBO is "inward looking"[53] or selectively structured, as it primarily emphasizes interactions among the United States and its allies while largely excluding adversaries, competitors, and marginalized underdeveloped nations. The so-called "universal values" embedded in these

[51] Holm, A. B. (2020). Toward a Marxist concept of community. *SATS*, 21(1), 1-20.

[52] Shan, C.Y. (2024, Apr. 30). The Historical Context of Marx's Concept of Community. *Chinese Journal of Social Sciences*. https://www. cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202404/t20240430_5748830.shtml; Sang, M.X. & Guo, Z. (2018, Feb. 26). Historical Coordinates, Practical Foundation, and Global Significance of A Community with A Shared Future for Mankind. *Belt & Road Portal*. https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/ p/48850.html.

[53] Glaser, C. L. (2019). A Flawed Framework: Why Liberal International Order Concept Is Misguided. *International Security*, 43(4), 51-87.

RBO reflect an imposition of Western ideals on other civilizations, often in a manner reminiscent of historical imperialism. This perspective implicitly presupposes that what benefits the United States concurrently serves the interests of others. Another dimension of the RBO concept asserts that a hierarchy founded upon legitimate political authority, bestowed by subordinate (i.e., less powerful) states to the dominant (i.e., more powerful) state, is crucial for explaining cooperation in an anarchic international system.[54] The dominant power at top of the pyramid disproportionately influences terms of ostensibly bargained agreements, while subordinate followers are bound to relinquishes some of their rights. John Dugard, an emeritus professor of International Law at Leiden University and a human rights expert, argues that the RBO is the US' alternative to international law, an order that encapsulates international law as interpreted by the US to accord with its national interests, is "a chimera, meaning whatever US and its followers want it to mean at any given time", "premised on us own willingness to ignore, evade or rewrite the rules whenever they seem inconvenient"[55], and is in essence a new charter of imperial laws designed by the US, in order to justify any action she wants to take, but using it as a means of criticizing and punishing those who do not abide by the imperial diktat.

The salient divergence between CSF and RBO lies in their different interpretations of the bedrock of international order. The thrust of CSF's critique goes as follows: the prevailing international system has been crafted by Western powers primarily for their own benefit and is just "is a poor substitute for the universalist visions of the UN's founders"[56], rather than invoking international law and adhering to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. The venerable institutions at the heart of this order purport to represent the world, yet they remain firmly under Western dominion. The "universal values" enshrined within these entities are nothing more than imperialistic impositions of Western ideologies upon other civilizations. This assertion holds equally true for the political institutions and development models pioneered by the West and now often perceived as ostensibly technocratic instruments devoid of overt ideological connotations. Some of these concepts and institutions may indeed constitute valuable advancements applicable to all peoples; others stand merely as relics that would have long since faded into obscurity were it not upheld by the illegitimate American hegemony. In other words, the identity of those who establish the rules is crucial in this context. Consequently, state power underpins principles of order as well as more ambiguous commitments to poorly or well-defined norms, standards, and values. The institutional design of many international organizations already gives these states much more power and privilege. This applies not only to the UN Security Council with its well-known veto rights, but also to the IMF or the World Bank, for example, where voting shares are based on a quota system that gives richer countries significantly more formal (and informal) influence over decision-

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[54] Mattern, J. B. & Zarakol , A. Hierarchies in World Politics. *International Organization*, 70(3), 623-654. Donnelly, J. Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society. *European Journal of International Relations*, 12(2), 139-170; McConaughey, M., Musgrave, P. & Nexon, D.H. Beyond Anarchy: Logics of Political Organization, Hierarchy, and International Structure. *International Theory*, 10 (2), pp. 181-218.

[55] Dugard, J. (2023). The choice before us: International law or a 'rules-based international order'?. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 36(2), 223-232

[56] Gillespie, P. (2024, Sept. 28). Rules-based international order is a poor substitute for the vision of the UN's founders. *The Irish Times*. https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2024/09/28/rules-based-international-order-is-a-poor-substitute-for-the-vision-of-the-uns-founders/

making. Large states from the Global South advocate for enhanced access to corridors of power in pursuit of greater equality, seeking their support through alternative narratives that promote a more inclusive form of multilateralism.

For another thing, as early as 2000s, anti-globalization sentiments has already sprouted in the affluent countries of the Global North, while majorities of policymakers and the public in the developing countries of the Global South tend to view globalization as a positive force.[57]. Recent increases in xenophobia, "our country first" mentality and unilateralism indicating an anti-global backlash (in terms of attitudes) and deglobalization (in terms of policy)[58], aggravates the malfunction of neo-liberalism by fundamentally threatening pillars of the contemporary international order. The disassembly of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, along with protests directed at international financial institutions such as the IMF, exemplifies an increasing resistance to economic globalization. As global challenges became more intricate and deeply intertwined with domestic issues, interdependence necessitated more profound adjustments. However, existing institutions have stagnated and fragmented, leading to gridlock in global governance. Disillusioned with globalization, many individuals have embraced narrower conceptions of community. This shift fosters conflicting value systems, leading some people to exclude others from their circle of empathy and solidarity. Such exclusion is often justified on the basis of differences in religious or political beliefs, cultural heritage, or even physical appearance.

Conclusion

The existing system had come under significant strain and "in a state of turmoil and upheaval".[59] The most visible features includes the latent geopolitical gambling between old and new world power centers, increased sectarian/ethnic nationalism pressures, far-reaching networks of organized crime and cross-border terrorism, staggering coordination towards environmental degradation, extreme political polarization and even animosity, the rise of non-state actors and movements, and in some cases the distortion and corruption of news and views on a worldwide scale, and mass movements of migrants and refugees. The countries of the Global South suffer from all these challenges more than its developed counterparts. The world is confronted by rising catastrophic and existential risks, many caused by the choices its members make.[60] Therefore, the members of the Global South should concert their actions with a shared vision more than ever before, and they are also deserved to benefit more from China as an emerging superpower with economic and political clout to lead them in shaping a more stable and just world.

From the "League of Proletarians of All Nations", "Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" to "Community of Common Destiny", this trajectory bears witness to historical coordinates that pinpoint linear visions of China to encourage its fellow survivors in

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[57] Bhagwati, J. (2004). Anti-globalization: why?. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 26(4), 439-463; Azedi, A. & Schofer, E. (2023). Assessing the anti-globalization movement: Protest against the WTO, IMF, and World Bank in cross-national perspective. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 64(3), 445-470.

[58] Burgoon, B. (2012). Inequality and anti-globalization backlash by political parties. *European Union Politics*, 14(3), 408–435.

[59] House of Lords International Affairs Committee, "UK foreign policy in a shifting world order", 18 Dec. 2018, HL Paper 250 of session 2017-19.

[60] UN General Assembly, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024, *Pact for the Future,* A/RES/79/1.

fetters of colonization, marginalization and exclusion to concertedly to make a stand as "rebels", then "responsive participants" and now "active agents" in different spatial and temporal backdrops worldwide. These consecutive efforts are deeply rooted in the synchronous inheritance of Confucianism with Sinicization of Marxism, coupled with a deconstructionist and transcendent attitude towards colonial domination, development marginalization as well as cultural homogeneity.

With China and other countries of the Global South once again emerging as key swing votes in contemporary global affairs, the emergence of a new narrative that underscores their interests and aspirations is a natural response. China's growing national power and international standing have positioned it as a bellwether, enabling it to propose the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) as part of this narrative. The role and principles of this initiative align with the previously mentioned three linear visions. The GCI emphasizes the importance of respecting history and tradition, which should not be seen as an obstacle but rather as a driving force to social and economic modernization. This is particularly important for smaller nations that, while not at the forefront of global civilizations, possess unique characteristics and foreign policy aspirations. If the diversities of civilizations are regarded as invaluable assets that amplify human strength, creativity, and resilience, then they ought to be preserved and championed. Any reckless amalgamation of these rich cultures into a singular entity would drastically diminish the complexity of global society, thereby exacerbating various risks and uncertainties. In the contemporary global information arena, any ideas emanating from Beijing is likely to meet with predominantly critical and often unjust reactions in Washington and other Western capitals. However, dismissing all politically charged and often superficial criticism of the GCI, one must acknowledge that the initiative raises several significant issues concerning the desirable future of the international system and humanity as a whole.

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1. Wellhofer, E. S. (1989). Core and Periphery: Territorial Dimensions in Politics. *Urban Studies*, 26(3)
2. Cox, K. R. and Reynolds, D . R. (1974). Locational Approaches to Power and Conflict. In *Locational Approaches to Power and Conflict*. New York: Wiley, pp.
3. See Palieraki, E. (2023). The Origins of the 'Third World': Alfred Sauvy and the Birth of a Key Global Post-War Concept. *Global Intellectual History*, 10(1).
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