

The Dream of the Dragon: A content analysis of Xi Jinping's "China Dream"

By Adam Osborne-Smith

A thesis submitted to the

Victoria University of Wellington

in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in Political Science

School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations

Victoria University of Wellington

2019

China under Xi Jinping has a story to tell. In recent years, China has devoted more time and energy extending its discursive influence overseas. Aspirational propaganda slogans such as Xi's "Chinese dream" indicate a potential change from Deng Xiaoping's "bide your time, hide your strength" towards an outwardly focussed foreign policy of Striving for Achievement as China's confidence grows. This project conducts a content analysis following the method set out by Klaus Krippendorff of 1907 Xinhua articles from 2013 – 2017 and finds that while this assertion was true shortly after articulation; coverage reverted to an inward focus in subsequent years. Furthermore, the findings show that there is an individualistic aspect to how the dream is portrayed whether it is intended by top government figures or not. Understanding how tifa develop, interrelate – or depart from each other – is vital in understanding contemporary political discourse in China. Lastly, the Chinese dream contains within it the beginnings of a prototype vision of Chinese exceptionalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank – first and foremost – my supervisor Dr Jason Young of the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre for his astute guidance and forthcoming support without which this project would have been fraught. His good humour, sharp mind, openness and demonstrable passion for scholarship regarding China is inspirational.

Above all, I would like to thank him for his kind patience; which was at times tried.

I would like to offer my immense thanks to the Contemporary China Research Centre for the provision of an office and the excellent conversation to be had that is often overlooked in the development of ideas. Furthermore, Andrew Wilford kindly aided in the initial testing of the analysis, referred some excellent materials and was the source of many lively discussions. It was a pleasure working near him and I would like to express my gratitude.

Dr Xavier Marquez at Victoria University and Dr Stephen Noakes at the University of Auckland provided insightful criticism and feedback that contributed immeasurably to the development of my ideas – many thanks to both of them for their care and time.

Also, I would like to mention Duncan Campbell for fuelling my interest in propaganda studies and Jonette Crysell for the encouragement to go to China. I would like to thank my father, Jeff Osborne, for his steadfast support and provision of junk food in the closing days of my research. Moreover, thank you to the coders who carefully undertook the laborious task of coding with the utmost care. Without your hard work this thesis would not have been possible.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to my mother Kim Smith for, well, everything really. She loved, and is loved.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Rectification of Names	8
Mao's Propaganda Legacy	12
Media After Mao	15
Media Consolidation Under Xi	17
The Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation	22
3. Tifa in Context	26
From Biding Strength to the Chinese Dream	31
The Voice of China	35
4. Method	38
Finding the Dataset and Unitizing	39
Coding	41
Thematic Frames	42
Reliability	46
Coder Selection	49
Validity	50
Content Analysis on Chinese Media	51
5. Results and Findings	53
World Dream Versus a Dream for China	53
The Individual Chinese Dream	59
Speaking Softly	61
Thematic Collocations	62
6. Discussion	69
A Prototype Vision of Exceptionalism	69
Propaganda and Action	73
7. Conclusion	77
8. Bibliography	79
9. Appendix	92

“The empire of the future will be the empire of the mind.”¹

– Winston Churchill

1. Introduction

A major concern for China’s leaders since its rise to power has been the image they project to the world in light of their growing strength. The world pays them more heed; subtle verbal cues can bring global joy or anxiety – the words of a giant travel far.

Mao Zedong once remarked that the Communist party could seize power by “relying on a gun and a pen.”² Later rulers have observed this advice articulating signature slogans backed by powerful propaganda machines. Chinese media is tightly controlled; even if what is published by journalists is not wholly synonymous with the official state line they remain “dancing in shackles.”³ Press watchdog Freedom House scores China as having one of the least free Medias in the world.⁴ Many China watchers note that media controls have tightened during the Xi Jinping era – and that the Communist Party of China (CCP) has enhanced its authority greatly during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2017.⁵

This is in part what makes researching China’s media so interesting. Given the tight line media must walk, the internal nature of the ruling Politburo, and more generally, a centralised authoritarian system shrouded in secrecy – there is a lot of information to be gleaned by studying media discourse given a lack of other sources. A good starting point for understanding the foreign policy goals of a nation is a rigorous understanding of how it articulates its own image even if that image fails to line up perfectly with reality.

The central questions postulated by this thesis are:

¹ Yang Pei Ming (2013), “Art Tells History,” in Yang Pei Ming (Ed.) and Pearl Young (Art Ed.) *Chinese Propaganda Poster Collection: Catalogue 2013*, China: Shanghai PPAC, p 2. Yang Pei Ming is the director of the Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Centre who chooses to use this quote from Churchill at the start of his catalogue. The Centre holds the only comprehensive surviving collection of over 5000 propaganda posters from 1949 – 1979, well worth a visit for any person interested in political messaging in China.

² Li Yang (2015), “Development and Communication: The Evolution of Chinese Media,” in Robin Jeffrey and Ronojoy Sen (eds.), *Media at Work in China and India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p 4.

³ Susan Shirk (2007), “Changing media, changing foreign policy in China,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8(01), p 46.

⁴ Freedom House (2016), “Freedom of the Press 2016 Table of Scores,” available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press-2016/table-country-scores-fotp-2016> accessed: 03/01/2017.

⁵ BBC News (2017), “Xi Jinping is tightening his grip on power. How did one man come to embody China’s destiny?,” BBC News Online October 13, 2017, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idth/Thoughts_Chairman_Xi accessed: 10/01/2018.

What themes are most commonly attached to Xi Jinping's "China Dream" in state media outlets such as Xinhua? Is the "Chinese Dream" presented to Western audiences as a concept of global engagement?

The use of signature slogans or "tifa"⁶ like Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" is nothing new in China and is a hallmark of its political system. Each generation of China's communist leaders have had defining slogans that encapsulate their goals and ideas; most notably Deng Xiaoping's "socialism with Chinese Characteristics," which signified an ideological broadening of policy, Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents," or Hu Jintao's "peaceful development" and promotion of the initially Confucian principle of "harmonious society." Tifa serve a vast range of functions from guiding the nation to creating a monopoly on discourse, selling ideas, or communicating with the world.

Other political systems obviously have popular slogans ("Make America Great Again)," but those used by the Chinese Communist Party take on a spirit of their own, especially given their formulaic rigidity and history of development.

Firstly, I will detail how tifa have been wielded by previous Chinese leaders and what changes Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream may hail. The Chinese Dream is notably a term with a large amount of plasticity⁷ making it very opaque at face value, a thorough exploration of how Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream compares to the tifa of previous leaders and their history of development is the starting point of this analysis. These steps are necessary to ascertain the *context* that the Chinese dream is used in which is crucial to the content analysis that follows.⁸ Furthermore, Chinese media under Xi has undergone a rapid global expansion amidst tighter political controls domestically – which forms the backdrop against which the Chinese dream is employed in.

⁶ "Tifa" are "fixed formulations" which are used for propagating ideological ideas – they are essentially slogans with Chinese characteristics eg. "harmonious society." See Joseph James Alvaro (2013), "Political discourse in China's English language press," *World Englishes* 32(2), pp 147 – 152.

⁷ Peter Ferdinand (2016), "Westward ho – the China dream and 'one belt, one road': Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping," *International Affairs* 92(4), p 944. Xi Jinping is not alone in having a very flexible central slogan, Hu Jintao's "harmonious society" is equally vague. Alternatively, "Peaceful Rise" or "Three Represents" are flexible but refer to more concrete concepts such as a generally non-confrontational foreign policy, or a focus on economic production, cultural development, and majority interest.

⁸ See Klaus Krippendorff (2013), *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* 3rd Edition, United States: SAGE Publications, pp 413 – 415.

Viewing the Chinese dream in context reveals that the dream is an extension of previously established concepts – and some scholars have claimed it represents a shift towards an assertive new globally orientated foreign policy of “Striving for Achievement.”⁹

The second major part of this thesis will involve a content analysis of relevant English language articles from Xinhua that have been logged on the database Factiva between 2013 to 2017. My aim is to produce a “*discourse analysis*”¹⁰ that focuses on how the Chinese Dream is represented, namely, what major themes it connects with and how the term is phrased. A total of 1906 articles appear in this date range. Each article has been placed into a set theme to create a structured, analysable, representation.¹¹ This has involved coding each article into a thematic dimension (the themes chosen are Military/Strategic, Political/World, Political/Domestic, Personal/Individual, and Irrelevant). The paper I am using as a model is Yi Edward Yang and Xinsheng Liu’s “*The China ‘Threat’ through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992-2006*,”¹² which used similar thematic dimensions for coding articles from prestige papers in the United States to measure the prevalence of the China Threat theory in reporting.

In sum, the analysis presented here shows that the “Chinese Dream” was predominantly represented as a concept of global engagement over 2014 – 2015 but that this focus waned in subsequent years. As such, the findings do not support that global engagement was central to how the dream was portrayed in later years although it was a notable aspect. Furthermore, it was found that there is a substantive individualistic aspect to the Chinese dream contrary to assertions in the literature that it is always rationalized as a collective concept.

The reason I have chosen to focus on English speaking media is *precisely* because it is so immaculately manicured. China’s English based media is proportionately small; and China’s leadership has shown increasing concern about how it is portrayed to the world. Furthermore, a news outlet like Xinhua is presented as the Communist party’s “voice of China to the world”¹³ and the central aim of this thesis is to ascertain how the Chinese dream is framed to the foreign community. Other publications fill this role, such as the People’s Daily or the Global Times,

⁹ See Yan Xuetong (2014), “From keeping a low profile to striving for achievement,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7(2).

¹⁰ Krippendorff (2013), pp 22 – 23. Klaus Krippendorff defines discourse analysis as “text above the level of sentences.” It is concerned with how phenomena are represented in a range of texts, usually studying a number of them over time.

¹¹ Ibid, p 126.

¹² Yi Edward Yang and Xinsheng Liu (2012), “The China ‘Threat’ through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992 – 2006,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 21(76), pp 695.

¹³ Alvaro (2013), p 146.

however, Xinhua has a long history of being staunchly in line with foreign policy goals¹⁴ and has not been the focus of as much scholarly attention.

Finally, after presenting what themes are most commonly associated with the Chinese dream it is advanced that it is a *proto-type* concept of Chinese exceptionalism. This leaves Western countries with a dilemma of whether or not to engage with the narrative advanced.

¹⁴ See Susan L. Shirk (2010), “Changing Media, Changing China,” in Susan Shirk (ed.) *Changing Media, Changing China*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp 7 – 11; Anne-Marie Brady (2007), *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, United States of America: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, pp 15 – 19; Sabine Mokry (2017), “Whose Voices Shape China’s Global Image? Links Between Reporting Conditions and Quoted Sources in News about China,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26(104), p 658.

2. Rectification of Names

In *Political discourse in China's English language press*, Joseph James Alvaro claims the fixation of China's communist leaders with politically correct terminology stems from a Confucian doctrine known as *zhenming* or "the rectification of names."¹⁵ For society to function, political actors must be perfectly on the same page, otherwise chaos may ensue.¹⁶ Tifa are "official slogans"¹⁷ that "act as a guide on the correct choice of words to talk about politically sensitive matters."¹⁸ The adoption of personal slogans is a "rite of passage"¹⁹ for all leaders since Mao Zedong and cementing tifa into the constitution is a routine act to solidify legitimacy.

Every leader since Mao has had a number of tifa that define their period (see table 1). A defining characteristic of tifa is that they *must* be adopted and endorsed by the paramount leader of the day; all of the notable tifa I have encountered in the literature so far are endorsed by the relevant leader even if they were not initially formulated by the them, with the exception of Zhou Enlai in the final days of Mao.

The Chinese dream itself is often misattributed to Xi Jinping,²⁰ even though there are many texts discussing it on similar terms prior to his keynote speech adopting the term at "The Road to Rejuvenation" exhibition following his rise to power at the 18th CCP Congress in November 2012. Wang Huning – a current member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo – is potentially the mastermind behind the Chinese dream as well as other notable tifa given his abnormal level of influence over the last three generations of CCP leadership.²¹ What matters in such a notoriously opaque system centralized around a core leader is not the brain child, but that Xi has adopted the Chinese dream as a guiding mantra which has ramifications for China's goals and foreign policy objectives.

¹⁵ Alvaro (2013), p 148.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ William A. Callahan (2016), "China's 'Asia Dream': The Belt Road Initiative and the new regional order," *Asia Journal of Comparative Politics* 1(3), p 228.

¹⁸ Brady (2007), p 74.

¹⁹ The Economist (2013), "Chasing the Chinese dream," The Economist Online May 4, 2013, at <https://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21577063-chinas-new-leader-has-been-quick-consolidate-his-power-what-does-he-now-want-his> accessed: 23/01/2018.

²⁰ China Daily (2014), "Background: Connotations of Chinese Dream," China Daily Online March 15, 2014, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014npcandcppcc/2014-03/05/content_17324203.htm accessed: 12/08/2018.

²¹ Haig Patapan and Yi Wang (2018), "The Hidden Ruler: Wang Huning and the Making of Contemporary China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 27(109), pp 47 – 48.

Table 1. Notable Tifa of Post-Mao Paramount Leaders

Paramount Leader	Tifa	Explanation
Deng Xiaoping (1978 – 1989)	“Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.”	An extensively cited tifa in the Chinese world; signalled a broadening of ideology in 1978.
	“Reform and Opening Up.”	Signalled the start of tenuously liberalizing the economy.
	“Achieve the Four Modernizations”	A call to mobilise the whole nation to modernize industry, agriculture, Science and technology, and defence in 1978. ²²
	“Seek Truth From Facts”	Was adopted by Deng Xiaoping from Mao Ze Dong to show loyalty, while also advocating for economic pragmatism and a reformist agenda. ²³
	“Hide Our Capacities and Bide Our Time.”	Effectively summarised foreign policy throughout the 1990s ²⁴ - called for China to keep a low profile in the international realm.
	“Four Cardinal Principles”	Announced in 1979 – affirmed commitment to uphold the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Ze Dong thought. Deng considered these fundamentals beyond reproach. ²⁵
	“One Country, Two Systems”	The guiding constitutional principle articulated by Deng in the 1980s for the reunification of China. Aimed specifically at Hong Kong and Taiwan as a reassurance they will not be encroached on by Beijing upon return.
Jiang Zemin (1989 – 2003)²⁶	“Three Represents”	A guiding theory ratified in 2002, but initially articulated by Jiang in a controversial speech from 2001 that admitted entrepreneurs to the CCP. ²⁷ The “represents” are for advanced

²² C C. Ching (1984), “Psychology and the Four Modernizations in China,” *International Journal of Psychology* 19(1-4), pp 61- 62.

²³ Ezra F. Vogel (2011), *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, United States: Harvard University Press, p 172.

²⁴ Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Andrew Small (2008), “China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy - Is Beijing Parting with Pariahs,” *Foreign Affairs* 87(1), p 41.

²⁵ Merle Goldman (1994), *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era*, United States: Harvard University Press, pp 55 – 57.

²⁶ It is important to note that while Deng Xiaoping was a paramount leader, he held de facto power and was never the President of the PRC. There was a transition period where offices were transferred with Deng retaining some power; Jiang Zemin was President of the PRC from 1993 – 2003, but General Secretary of the CCP Central Committee from 1989 and Chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission from 1990.

²⁷ Joseph Fewsmith (2003), “Studying the three represents,” *China Leadership Monitor* 8(1), pp 2-3.

		culture, advanced productive forces, and serving the interests of the majority.
	“Guidance of Public Opinion”	Was initially used following the Tiananmen square protests, but adopted by Jiang in 1996. ²⁸ Concerns the control of media reporting.
Hu Jintao (2002 – 2012)	“Peaceful Development”	Initially formulated as “peaceful rise” by Zheng Bijian in November 2003. The term was then adopted by Hu Jintao the following month. It advanced China as a peaceful, non-threatening rising power; encountered trouble shortly after formulation ²⁹ morphing into “peaceful development.” ³⁰
	“Scientific Outlook On Development”	A broad slogan addressing many social problems – largely adopted as a “people-centred” approach to development that has been extended to “leadership practices in general.” ³¹
	“Moderately Prosperous Society”	Initially a Confucian principle aimed at achieving an equal society with a high standard of living. The current leadership aims to achieve this objective by 2020.
	“Harmonious Society”	Is connected with the foreign policy equivalent “harmonious world.” Another vague tifa, broadly connected to furthering development while unifying the nation through emerging disparities. ³²
	“Eight honours, Eight Shames”	An eight point moral code aimed at cadres and also intended for society at large. ³³
	“Three Closenesses”	A compliment to the “Guidance of public opinion” justifying control of the media; means “closeness to reality,” “closeness to the masses,” and “closeness to real life.” ³⁴
Xi Jinping (2012 – foreseeable future)	“Chinese Dream”	An exceptionally “plastic” ³⁵ tifa that broadly encapsulates the wants and ambitions of the Chinese state and individuals.

²⁸China New Media Project (2013), “Guidance of Public Opinion,” available at <http://chinamediaproject.org/2013/11/05/guidance-of-public-opinion-%E8%88%86%E8%AE%BA%E5%AF%BC%E5%90%91/> accessed: 17/07/2018.

²⁹ R. L. Suettinger (2004), “The rise and descent of “peaceful rise,” *China Leadership Monitor* 12(2), pp 1, 3 – 8.

³⁰ Reuters (2007), “Chinese slogans mark Hu era,” Reuters Online September 8, 2007, available at <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-china-party-slogans/chinese-slogans-mark-hu-era-idUKMOL74807920070907> accessed: 23/01/2018.

³¹ Joseph Fewsmith (2004), “Promoting the scientific development concept,” *China Leadership Monitor* 11(30), p 1.

³² Zheng Yongnian and Sow Keat Tok (2007), “Harmonious society and harmonious world: China’s policy discourse under Hu Jintao,” *Briefing Series* 26, 1.1 – 3.2.

³³ Alvaro (2013), p 151.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ferdinand (2016), p 944.

“Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation”	Sets forth the ambition to reclaim China’s place as a world superpower as in prior centuries – often collocates with the “Chinese dream.”
“The Belt and Road Initiative”	A well-publicised infrastructure project expanding on the old silk road; encompasses many countries and aims to place China at the centre of global trade.
“Common Community of Human Destiny”	Xi’s philosophical approach to globalization first mentioned at Davos in 2017, ³⁶ often collocates with reference to “win-win” trade deals and cooperation in Xinhua’s reporting. Sometimes rephrased in other forms such as “Community of shared future for mankind.”
“New Principal Contradiction”	Articulated by Xi in October 2017 at the 19 th National Congress. Emphasises “addressing developments imbalances and inadequacies.” ³⁷ Primarily concerns uneven development.
“Three Stricts, and three Earnests”	A moral philosophy to be “strict with oneself in practicing self-cultivation, using power, and exercising self-discipline; and to be earnest in one’s thinking, work, and behaviour.” ³⁸
“Four Comprehensives”	The four comprehensives are to “finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, deepen reform, advance law-based governance, and strengthen Party self-governance.” ³⁹
“Four Confidences”	Faith in the nation’s path, theory, system and culture. Was initially termed the “three confidences” by Hu; was later modified by Xi with the addition of culture. ⁴⁰

Like sloganeering in other countries tifa serve to give a broad indication of policy concerns and create a normative ideal of where the country should be heading. Tifa are often used to frame

³⁶ Quartz (2017), “All the buzz words Xi Jinping added to the Chinese Communist Party’s Constitution,” Quartz Online October 26, 2017, available at <https://qz.com/1111474/chinas-19th-party-congress-all-the-buzzwords-xi-jinping-added-to-the-chinese-communist-partys-constitution/> accessed: 24/05/2018.

³⁷ Xi Jinping (2017b), “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,” delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18 2017 published online at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf accessed: 22/01/2017, p 11.

³⁸ Ibid, p 6.

³⁹ Ibid, p 1.

⁴⁰ Quartz (2017).

the parameters of a debate⁴¹ and act as a guide when discussing anything political. They are a lens and more importantly provide a warning of what to steer clear of.

The formulation of tifa is a hallmark of the CCP that persists to the current day. Furthermore, they are characteristic of the Chinese political system and show a distinctive pattern of development dating from the Maoist era.

Mao's Propaganda Legacy

The use of tifa under the CCP is invariably connected to the propaganda efforts of Mao Zedong; who may have discarded of Confucian ideas such as the “four olds” (eg. old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas) but retained the rectification of names or *zhenming*.⁴² In a speech to the CCP's National Conference on Propaganda Work on the 12th of March 1956, Mao phrased the concept of rectification in the following way:

“As in the rectification movement during the anti-Japanese war, the method this time will be first to study a number of documents, and then, on the basis of such study, to examine one's own thinking and work and unfold criticism and self-criticism to expose shortcomings and mistakes and promote what is right and good.”⁴³

Initially, Mao Zedong phrased rectification as a call for mass research of competing ideas in a classically Hegelian sense – following which the public would (he seemed to presume) voluntarily move towards a common and “correct” doctrine. This speech was given prior to the “Hundred Flowers Campaign” which called for mass intellectual input from the public, and ended abruptly on the 8th of June 1957, when, in an editorial in *The People's Daily*, Mao famously declared “poisonous weeds” had grown among “the fragrant flowers;”⁴⁴ sparking the Anti-Rightist campaign. The purges that followed of many intellectuals and high-profile figures like Peng Dehuai entrenched a requirement of doctrinal purity – reinforced moreover during the tumult of the Cultural Revolution that followed lasting ten years from 1966. It was clear during this period that when Mao meant rectification, he essentially meant stay on his

⁴¹ Joseph Fewsmith (2005), “The Changing Methodology of Beijingology” In *Conference on 'Chinese Leadership, Politics, and Policy'*, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (Vol. 2), p 5.

⁴² Alvaro (2013), pp 148 – 149.

⁴³ Mao Ze Dong (1957), “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work,” from Mao Zedong's Selected Works Volume 5 published online at <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/...5/> accessed: 23/01/2017.

⁴⁴ Rebecca E. Karl (2010), *Mao Ze Dong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*, United States: Duke University Press, pp 96–97.

message perfectly. To all actors it became key for survival as tifa were employed widely to guide orthodoxy. Because tifa are succinct, compact, and very easy to remember (eg. “Three Dos and three Don’ts, the Five Black Categories),”⁴⁵ regurgitating them was a quick way for an individual to show they were drinking from the right cup.

What defined the Maoist era was the existence of “total propaganda” which aimed to “encircle the whole man all of the time.”⁴⁶ Compared to Western readers, who would read in part for gaining information, readers during the Cultural Revolution would read newspapers to “seek direction for their actions, sense the winds of change in politics, and to find guidance for their social behaviour.”⁴⁷ In such a strict environment, aimed at people of varying education levels, any message would need to be simple and easy to interpret. Furthermore, the central aim of Mao’s sloganeering (“Down with Imperialism! Down with the Warlords!”) was to spread rapidly throughout a diffuse country side; the success of which he was clearly very proud of.⁴⁸

As evidenced by the success of Mao in building a personality cult, seizing absolute power, and creating an enduring legacy in the annals of time – his skill as a propagandist at the least is unimpeachable. An awareness of propaganda was a defining characteristic of the Great Helmsman.

What is very notable about the Cultural Revolution is just how remarkably bottom-up the enforcement of doctrinal purity was. In the autobiographical novel *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang, Jung talks at great length about how many different types of students joined the ranks of the infamous “Red Guards” and just how decentralized the many different groups were.⁴⁹ The mobs that roamed around torturing perceived class enemies – especially teachers – really anyone unfortunate enough to get in their sights, were just normal university students and classmates mobilized by well-timed speeches inciting rebellion in line with Mao’s objectives (“It’s Right to Rebel!”). While the overall number of Red Guards is hard to determine, by one count over two million Red Guards descended on Peking University in the month of August 1966 alone.⁵⁰ The Red Guards mobilized en masse all over China during the “Great Linkup”

⁴⁵ Alvaro (2013), pp 152–153.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p 152; Jacques Ellul (1968), *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*, translated by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, United States: Alfred A. Knopf INC, pp 9–21.

⁴⁷ Alvaro (2013), pp 152 - 153.

⁴⁸ Mao Tse-Tung (1965), “Fourteen Great Achievements,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* 1st Edition, China: Foreign Languages Press, pp 47 – 49. Note “Mao Ze Dong” is the more common translation at present, the old translation as it appeared on the text has been preserved here.

⁴⁹ Jung Chang (1991), *Wild Swans*, Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, pp 374 – 394.

⁵⁰ Guobin Yang (2000), “The liminal effects of social movements: Red Guards and the transformation of identity,” in *Sociological Forum* 15(3), Kluwer Academic Publishers-Plenum Publishers, p 389.

between 1966-1967. The *Peking Review* claimed that Mao reviewed around 11 million Red Guards in Beijing from August to November 1966; who had travelled from all over the country.⁵¹ It would be reasonable to estimate a total number marginally higher, as undoubtedly, not all of the red guards would have necessarily made it to Beijing.

A key defining characteristic of this mass mobilization was Mao's iconic use of propaganda slogans and the wide spread fervour with which they were adopted. This is probably the most extreme example of the "rectification of names" in progress, where mass slogans were the primary device employed to mobilise the Red Guards against class enemies. Although Mao allegedly never ordered the Red Guards to kill, some did and public humiliation through to torture was common place.⁵² Many other groups aided and abetted the Red Guards in their grisly task – in part to avoid suspicion themselves.

In the Soviet Union or in many of its satellite states, secret police like the Stasi were the well-known enforcers of doctrine, listening to phone calls and pursuing the ideologically impure. The Nazi German Gestapo or paramilitaries like the Italian Blackshirts were relied on in fascist regimes. What is notable about the Cultural Revolution is just how much of a backseat any kind of state apparatus took in pushing the propaganda line, or cracking down on dissenters. Mass sloganeering directed a large part of the wider populace to take on this role which achieved success in consolidating Mao's power. This puts Mao's class of ideological totality in a league of its own by virtue of the sheer degree of mass involvement in enforcing the ideological line – coupled with no central role for paramilitaries or secret police. Other totalitarian examples certainly had varying degrees of mass support but the difference is in degree.

The central role of tifa to mobilise such a large number of people in China's recent history and Mao's flare for rhetoric is certainly not lost on China's modern leadership. Furthermore, sloganeering under the CCP has a very distinctive style developed from this era that continues to the modern day. Tifa must be studied in context and interrelate – sometimes tifa from one leader are even added to by a successor (as with the "Four Confidences" adapted from Hu Jintao by Xi, see Table 1). The opening of Xi Jinping's address to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October of 2017 was peppered with the tifa of his predecessors.⁵³ The interrelation between tifa is discussed in more detail later in this chapter,

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Jung (1991), p 379.

⁵³ Xi (2017b).

for now it is important to note that tifa under the CCP have a pattern and history of development dating from the Maoist period. Understanding modern slogans like the Chinese Dream must proceed from a contextual understanding of previous tifa, which like all political slogans, emerge from complex historical circumstances.

Media After Mao

The propaganda tactics of Mao Zedong characterized by all-encompassing narratives that must be embraced by all actors are certainly dated, however, a “surprisingly large range of propaganda methodology common in the Mao years has been modernised and updated to suit the needs of the current period.”⁵⁴

Scholars have noted that lower-level media acting in lock step with the central government is no longer the case – perhaps changing as long ago as the late 1990s.⁵⁵ The China of today is not the China of the Maoist period which only had sixty-nine newspapers in the entire country in 1979.⁵⁶ China’s regime of strict media controls goes through periods of tightening, then loosening, only to tighten again.⁵⁷ Bing *et al* present the case of Guangdong based Southern Weekend newspaper, which enjoyed a comparable amount of autonomy in the late 1990s, but was targeted by the authorities in 2003 with the removal of many of its editors and increased supervision. The Southern Metropolis Daily, an editorially similar publication, was targeted in early 2004 which was part of a wider effort to bring such publications to heel, often for alleged criminal activities like tax evasion.⁵⁸ There are waves of media liberalization followed by collar jerks of authoritarian regression.

There are some smaller online publications such as “Sixth Tone”⁵⁹ that demonstrate a fairly high level of investigative journalism, going so far as to talk about official corruption or challenges in the country-side to talking candidly about pollution – even if the occasional dissenting article seems to go “missing” or have trouble loading from time to time.

⁵⁴ Brady (2007), p 74.

⁵⁵ Guan Bing, Ying Xia and Gong Cheng (2017), “Power Structure and Media Autonomy in China: The Case of Southern Weekend,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26(104), p 234.

⁵⁶ Susan L. Shirk (2007), “Changing media, changing foreign policy in China,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8(01), p 7.

⁵⁷ See Bing *et al* (2017), pp 234 – 238.

⁵⁸ Brady (2007), pp 57 – 60.

⁵⁹ See <http://www.sixthtone.com/>. Sixth Tone is one of my favourite China based media outlets.

Organisations like Xinhua News Agency, The People's Daily, Red Flag, or the Guangming Daily are subject to close "guidance" from the Central Publicity Department (CPD);⁶⁰ which seems to have less time for smaller publications that are not expected to spew forth tifa. Furthermore, Sixth Tone focusses mainly on contentious smaller issues but seems to avoid criticising the central government directly or commenting on wider political events. Outside of the mainland the Hong Kong based South China Morning Post (SCMP) also offers a range of contentious views and critical reporting even after being purchased by the Alibaba group.⁶¹

There seems to be a relationship between size and outreach – shortly put propaganda capability – and the level of censorship a publication is subject to. Being Hong Kong based and not part of the mainland seems to offer a greater degree of freedom while still being close enough to China to offer insightful criticism. Viewing China's entire media landscape as one in the same is inherently erroneous, as there are some publications that have demonstrated a large degree of independence at certain points in time. News agencies in China can vary greatly in size, orientation and outreach. English language media tends to have a lesser obligation to echo CCP terminology as long as the ideology is accurate; although there is variance across different outlets and publications like Xinhua are expected to walk the line.

Broadly speaking, the tradition of strong centralized control through the CPD of China persists to the current day and there is general agreement in the literature that media remains tightly controlled. The central-level government provides 52% of all quotes made from official institutions to the news media;⁶² which demonstrates a remarkable level of discipline in staying on message. At the very least there has been "the odd combination of increasing economic liberalization and enduring authoritarian control."⁶³ These concepts are strange bedfellows to many outside observers – but perhaps this state of affairs is not so odd given the CCP's history of implementing media controls and that a similar principle could be applied to China in other spheres.

⁶⁰ Brady (2007), pp 15 - 18.

⁶¹ Alibaba is owned by famous entrepreneur Jack Ma and has ties to the Chinese government. The sale of SCMP to Alibaba in 2016 caused a well-publicized discussion about CCP influence on Press Freedom in Hong Kong – despite the sale SCMP has for the most part maintained its credibility and continues to publish highly critical articles. It is still blocked in mainland China.

⁶² Mokry (2017), pp 656-657.

⁶³ Bing *et al* (2017), p 234.

Media Consolidation Under Xi

Xi Jinping is intent on maintaining media controls and the view that the media in China is gradually liberalising over time would appear woefully naïve. Like Mao, Xi has placed centralized control over propaganda work at the centre of his platform.

In August 2013, not long after he launched the China dream, he attended the National Propaganda and Thought Work Conference urging a combative approach to “wage a war over public opinion” and formed a Central Leading Small Group to enhance online censorship.⁶⁴ Moreover, he purged vital parts of the Central Publicity Department installing Xu Lin as head of the Cyber Space Administration – a long-time ally the South China Morning Post suspects is part of a greater effort to build a “loyal and effective team to improve China’s image on the world stage.”⁶⁵ Whoever is in this post leads the propaganda effort to reach foreign audiences through online media. The current leader of the CPD Huang Kunming has worked closely with Xi for over twenty years in both Fujian and Zhejiang.⁶⁶ Beyond installing allies in key positions in the CPD, state media is being dramatically overhauled. An excellent article published recently by Damien Ma and Neil Thomas, *In Xi We Trust: How Propaganda Might Be Working in the New Era* aptly illustrates these changes.

One of Xi’s changes has been to centralize control of Radio and television networks under The CCP through the CPD. Although the CCP is omniscient across the government apparatus, The State Council is part of the official executive branch headed by the premier Li Keqiang that does have some degree of remove. At the end of the National People’s Congress in March 2018, it was agreed that management of the state controlled radio and television networks (China National Radio, China Radio International, China Central Television and its global branch the China Global Television Network) would be all rolled into the new China Media Group presented to the world as “The Voice of China” – the main changes being the creation of an easier to manage amalgamation and that now organisations that were previously under the State Council are now under the direct control of the CPD.⁶⁷ Centralization of state media

⁶⁴ Damien Ma and Neil Thomas (2018), “In Xi we Trust: How Propaganda Might Be Working in the New Xi Era,” available at <https://macropolo.org/committee-analysis/in-xi-we-trust/> accessed: 12/10/2018.

⁶⁵ South China Morning Post (2018a), “China names former internet tsar Xu Lin as new international propaganda chief,” South China Morning Post Online October 8, 2018, at <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2160623/china-names-former-internet-tsar-xu-lin-new> accessed 15/10/2018 accessed: 10/10/2018.

⁶⁶ Ma and Thomas (2018).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

under the CPD, which is directly controlled by the Party, gives Xi's carefully placed allies a tighter hold over managing China's vast state propaganda apparatus.

Beyond enhanced powers over the organs of communication there is also evidence to suggest that the CPD has had a huge boost in funding over Xi's tenure. Although CCP organisations do not publish financial reports and China's spending on propaganda is opaque, the total state expenditure on "cultural undertakings" reached a "two-decade high" of 85.6 billion yuan in 2017; a decent proxy for state spending on propaganda and significantly more than funding in the Hu Jintao era.⁶⁸ Much of this funding will have gone into extending global outreach campaigns as CGTN has expanded aggressively in recent years leaving a noticeable footprint of foreign offices around the world.⁶⁹ Ma and Thomas tenuously advance using a number of reports that the CPD budget alone in 2015 was 2.5 billion yuan – an increase on prior years which even if faulty would represent a significant increase.⁷⁰ Regardless, it is credible with Xi's emphasis on propaganda and other actions that the CPD is getting more attention, power and money than it was previously under Hu. That is not to say that the CPD has ever been neutered only that there has been an expansion of its role.

Perhaps the most crucial change is that some propaganda pieces in China are *actually* becoming good. Ma and Thomas note that the 90-minute documentary *Amazing China*, which started as a CPD mini-series, showed the kind of production value usually reserved "for a David Attenborough mega production like *Planet Earth*, not a Chinese propaganda flick."⁷¹ *Wolf Warrior 2* is also widely cited as a propaganda marvel experiencing immense domestic box office success to the tune of \$800 million USD,⁷² while sporting an unabashedly jingoistic storyline – movie magic that connects well with the CCP's message promoting nationalism, loyalty to The Party, and a militarily strong and resurgent China.

The Party may be powerful but it cannot necessarily coerce that many people into movie theatres and there is no indication that it did. These kinds of efforts as well as harnessing red rap songs, propagating pro-party memes and the famous "50 Centers" – individuals who are paid to post seemingly organic messages of support online – shows a range of propaganda

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ The Guardian (2018), "Inside China's audacious global propaganda campaign", The Guardian Online December 7, 2018, at <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/07/china-plan-for-global-media-dominance-propaganda-xi-jinping> accessed: 07/12/2018.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Forbes (2017), "China's 'Wolf Warrior 2' Becomes 2nd Film In History To Reach \$800M In A Single Territory," available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robcairn/2017/08/27/chinas-wolf-warrior-2-becomes-2nd-film-in-history-to-reach-800m-in-a-single-territory/#36b346363460> accessed: 08/10/2018.

methods unrivalled in the totalitarian world. These efforts are a far cry from the bland television shows depicting the heroic Communist Party defeating the awful Japanese invaders that are typically seen in dumpling stores run by old people – and that in a way characteristic of youth the world over are universally scorned almost by association. Some modern-day propaganda efforts are becoming more in tune with China's zeitgeist and are coming across as less hackneyed – an inherent flaw of top-down state sponsored propaganda campaigns.

In the online realm Xi has shown an even greater zeal for controlling the narrative. A major guideline issued in early 2012, restricting online anonymity and the free discourse it entails by requiring internet users to provide real names to service providers, does predate his rule showing that Hu Jintao also had similar concerns.⁷³ Following this there has been an expansion of methods including throttling, keyword filtering, the wholesale blocking of even more websites, and widespread intimidation tactics carried out against foreign journalists.⁷⁴ “The Great Firewall” has long been present, but it is becoming more sophisticated, and there have been overtures towards restricting Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) that are commonly used to vault the wall. Effectively restricting VPNs would be a monumental task that has not yet been substantively actioned – if Xi were successful in targeting them it would be a significant change within China. VPNs are widespread in major cities along the coast and individuals possessing them seldom attracts the ire of the authorities.

Google has been attracting a lot of media attention over recent months for its development of special software known as “Dragonfly,”⁷⁵ which adheres to China's censorship regulations, and indicates that the tech giant may be on the verge of acquiescing to the governments requirements for entering the Chinese market. This would represent a marked change in Google's stance supporting internet freedom. In 2015 at a World Internet Conference in Zhejiang, Xi called for nations to respect “cyber sovereignty” in a clear message that internet control is a national priority.⁷⁶ The right of nation states to control the internet against any universal notion of free speech is a fairly predictable argument from the CCP in a similar vain to the pluralistic justifications employed to defend the system in general. Online censorship

⁷³ Xu Beina and Eleanor Albert (2014), “Media censorship in China,” *Council on Foreign Relations* 25, p 246.

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp 246 – 247.

⁷⁵ South China Morning Post (2018b), “Google's privacy chief confirms existence of ‘censored Chinese search engine’ Project Dragonfly,” South China Morning Post Online September 27, 2018, at <https://www.scmp.com/tech/big-tech/article/2165934/googles-privacy-chief-confirms-existence-project-dragonfly-says-he> accessed: 10/10/2018..

⁷⁶ BBC News (2015), “China internet: Xi Jinping calls for ‘cyber sovereignty,’” BBC News Online December 16, 2015, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-35109453> accessed: 10/10/2018.

shows no sign of liberalizing and the outlook for proponents of internet freedoms in China is bleak.

In 2018 access to the BBC website was blocked nationwide while it was accessible even in politically sensitive areas like Xinjiang at least until October 2017.⁷⁷ Xi has been largely successful at blocking dissenting publications and may even win concessions from Google due to the size of the Chinese market.

Given that China's brilliantly sardonic and censorship savvy online community is possibly the only real source of any effective counter message, these moves are no small consideration. Internet activism has been identified as a real threat by the CCP. Prior to his arrest in 2009, Liu Xiaobo, a late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and China's most renowned dissident, used the internet as a platform to circulate petitions surrounding democracy and human rights.⁷⁸ Others have launched campaigns regarding food safety due to the melamine scandal in 2008 through to NGOs pushing for environmental transparency – and some of these campaigns have even been successful in forcing the government to act.⁷⁹ China's repression over official discourse and the bottom-up aspects of internet campaigning makes it a natural source of instability.

There is a broader trend in China under Xi towards increased media centralization, further censorship, and better propaganda. Through both word and action there is ample evidence that the Xi era is a period of authoritarian collar jerks in so far as the media is concerned.

A crucial aspect of tifa is that they are employed in a largely authoritarian environment. In Western democracies politicians are expected to stay on message and their careers can be ruined if they stray far from the party line – but what characterises China's system is the broader array of actors that are required to stay on message – and the embeddedness of the CPD across news agencies, government departments, the army, mass organisations, non-government organisations, sports; and of course foreign outreach news outlets like Xinhua.⁸⁰ Foreign

⁷⁷ I visited Xinjiang in early October 2017 and read the BBC website daily. It did encounter problems loading a particular piece titled "China congress: how authorities censor your thoughts" published on the 16th of October 2017. That night, I was socializing with someone from England, who was interrogated at length by police when we returned to the hostel late in the evening. We do know the police were under instructions to only interrogate foreigners travelling on UK passports and other foreigners were barely questioned. An elderly man from the United States even escaped questioning by pretending to be asleep. I suspect given the BBC's focus on Xinjiang that this may have been the reason and that they could have been looking for journalists – although this is an assertion that is unable to be verified.

⁷⁸ Guobin Yang (2014), "Internet activism & the party-state in China," *Daedalus* 143(2), p 112.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p 113.

⁸⁰ See Brady (2007), pp 11 – 20. Many government institutions are led directly by the CCP Central Propaganda Department, media outlets like Xinhua have attaches that act in a "guiding" role. Through a nomenklatura system the Central Propaganda Department also decides on senior appointments for Xinhua and the People's Daily.

journalists working at Xinhua offices overseas are not exempt, with one ex-employee interviewed by the Guardian saying that he “felt the vast majority of his work was about domestic signalling, or telegraphing messages that demonstrated loyalty to the party line in order to curry favour with senior officials.”⁸¹ The whole point of tifa is that they are simple and ubiquitous; disseminating them requires a vast apparatus that has gone global.

There is also a distinction between censorship which is determining the appropriateness of newspaper articles, movies, novels, television shows, or academic works for public consumption; and the employment of tifa which is to impose a structured formulation that people (especially mainstream journalists) are required to actually use.⁸² They dominate discourse by being a positively proscribed requirement as opposed to a negative shut down. The ability to determine formal language and impose it at the very least on large formal media outlets is a weapon the “CCP guards jealously.”⁸³ A proscriptive duty is in many ways far more onerous although it functions alongside restricting information flows. Banning a certain number of phrases and scrubbing the internet clean of references to Winnie the Pooh⁸⁴ is one thing; but forcing mainstream journalists to focus time and energy on putting out the party line prevents them from using it to pursue other stories which could be considered more subversive.

There is something about the mass scale rote learning of key phrases that seems so very typical to China – as a campaign in 2016 encouraging people to copy the CCP constitution by hand demonstrates.⁸⁵ The central role of tifa as imposing a top-down dominant narrative that a large number of actors are compelled to use is characteristic of CCP rule. One trait that distinguishes the Chinese dream from previous tifa is that the *means* of its global propagation are considerably more developed than they were under previous leaders – and that Xi Jinping has centralized control of the media and shown a greater willingness to clamp down on competing narratives.

⁸¹ The Guardian (2018).

⁸² Fewsmith (2005), p 4.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Winnie the Poo was used jokingly as a caricature for Xi Jinping due to a perceived likeness on social media, the authorities did not take kindly to the comparison and references are censored on the internet.

⁸⁵ BBC News (2016), “Chinese couple spend wedding night writing out communist doctrine,” BBC News Online May 21, 2016, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-36339438> accessed: 27/01/2017. Furthermore, the education system in China is notoriously rote learning orientated.

The Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation

As the most recent signature tifa to date at the centre of Xi Jinping's platform it is worth discussing the Chinese dream in some detail.

Firstly, like other studies discussing the Chinese dream the objective is not to uncover some hidden "real meaning"⁸⁶ contained within the term or even provide a succinct definition. Achieving these goals is impossible given the terms malleability, plasticity and vagueness. The Chinese dream can be spoken about in relation to protecting the environment,⁸⁷ official corruption,⁸⁸ honouring female astronauts⁸⁹ – or even academic discussions such as to why "The Thucydides Trap" will not apply to the United States and China.⁹⁰

In many ways, the term is very simple promoting upwards mobility and individual striving against the backdrop of a grander dream of national rejuvenation. The Chinese dream is conceptual as opposed to being a defined policy objective that distinguishes itself from other tifa through its "positive energy."⁹¹ Like all such national dreams from the American dream to Martin Luther King's dream of equality, there is an inescapable tone of aspirational striving without a concrete picture of what exactly is being strove for.

It is through viewing the context of the term and its usage overtime that the shift in policy the dream represents can be analysed; which is the aim of the next section and the content analysis that follows. While the Chinese dream can and is projected on virtually anything it is firmly anchored to the concept of rejuvenating China to past glory.

⁸⁶ Sørensen, Camilla TN. (2015), "The Significance of Xi Jinping's" Chinese Dream" for Chinese Foreign Policy: From" Tao Guang Yang Hui" to" Fen Fa You Wei", *Journal of China and International Relations* 3(1), p 58.

⁸⁷ Xinhua (2013a), "1st LD Writethru-China Focus: China shows commitment to environmental protection," Factiva July 20, 2013, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#./!/?&_suid=153990110241506337534888150327 accessed: 01/04/2018.

⁸⁸ Xinhua (2013b), "Commentary: Bo's case shows China's anti-corruption consensus," Factiva July 26, 2013, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#./!/?&_suid=153990110241506337534888150327 accessed: 01/04/2018.

⁸⁹ Xinhua (2013c), "All-China Federation honours astronaut," Factiva July 31, 2013, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#./!/?&_suid=153990110241506337534888150327 accessed: 01/04/2018.

⁹⁰ Xinhua (2015), "(Xi's U.S. Visit) China Voice: Ten Reasons China, U.S can avoid Thucydides Trap," Factiva September 27, 2015, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#./!/?&_suid=153990214975208768629079110182 accessed: 04/05/2018. "The Thucydides Trap" is the theory that rising states will always come into conflict with the established hegemon, an observation from the Greek philosopher and historian Thucydides in regards to the conflict between Athens and Sparta.

⁹¹ Ma and Thomas (2018).

Xi Jinping himself phrases the Chinese dream as being concerned primarily with the “Chinese people’s aspiration for a better life.”⁹² In order to realize the Chinese dream, Gross Domestic Product per capita needs to be increased and development “remains the top priority for contemporary China.”⁹³ An obvious point still worth mentioning to limit confusion – *economic growth* has been the priority for all of China’s CCP leaders and Xi’s China dream is no exception. It is first and foremost a vision of national development and the core concept to this vision is achieving national “rejuvenation.”⁹⁴

Xi’s adoption of the Chinese dream at the Road to Rejuvenation exhibition in 2012 shortly after attaining power was no coincidence and the optics were planned meticulously. In the dataset of the 1906 Xinhua articles examined here, rejuvenation was the closest collocating theme to the Chinese dream in three hundred and twenty-one articles – well above that of any other concept. The concepts are so closely related that “The Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation” is almost another working title; although there are numerous other formulations as well (see Table 3 below). As discussed in the next section on the context of tifa, this rejuvenation concept is not new, and completing national rejuvenation is realised by achieving the “Two Centennial Goals;” the first goal being that of doubling GDP and per capita incomes compared to 2010 levels by 2020; the second being the building of a modern Socialist state by the middle of the century.⁹⁵

The rejuvenation narrative is itself a grand narrative firmly rooted in the history of China. Understanding the reasons as to why China must rejuvenate, to move past the Century of Humiliation that started with China’s subjugation by foreign powers in the 1840s and the signing of “700 unequal treaties” at the behest of gunboat diplomacy is vital to understanding the Chinese dream.⁹⁶ Prior to 1840 many Chinese considered their country the centre of the world and the only true culture⁹⁷ – even the name of the country *zhongguo* translates to “middle kingdom” which means being the focal point of the world. Part of the need to rejuvenate is to deal with the collective trauma of being knocked from this pedestal. According to William A. Callahan the goal of the Chinese dream is national rejuvenation through state power to achieve

⁹² Xi Jinping (2017), *The Governance of China II* 1st Edition, China: Foreign Languages Press, p 29.

⁹³ Ibid, p 30.

⁹⁴ Sørensen (2015), p 55.

⁹⁵ Xi (2017), p 30.

⁹⁶ Li Junru (2006), *The China Dream: China in Peaceful Development*, Beijing China: Foreign Languages Press, pp 26 – 29.

⁹⁷ Zheng Wang (2013), “The Chinese Dream: Concept and Context,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19(1), pp 3 – 4.

a form of Chinese exceptionalism;⁹⁸ a bold claim but worthy of merit if attempting to consider what a substantively rejuvenated China would probably look like.

China is *destined* to be a large country at the centre of the world following this narrative. Of all the Chinese scholars that write about the Chinese dream, the realisation of a World of Great Harmony seems to be the main shared end goal.⁹⁹ Like the American dream with its tones of an exceptional national destiny, the Chinese dream shares these overtures as China would be the fixture of this ideal world come manifest. A rejuvenated China is one that enjoys prestige and is at the very least second to none on hard power terms.

The Chinese dream is a nationalistic doctrine of restoring China's past glory from when it has been at the forefront of the world such as during the Tang dynasty from 618AD – 907AD.

It is not just economic development and high living standards that rejuvenates China – Xi notes it requires the ability to “fight and win wars”¹⁰⁰ and has worked to cultivate a strongman image. Commensurate with the status of a powerful country is a powerful military and China's military budget has been increasing in line with its economy. A common trend across history is that powerful nations usually possess a powerful military, with the exception of the growth of Japan following the close of World War Two which may have been aided in part by having a Pacifist constitution.

While a strong military is not a negligible part of the Chinese dream it is far more common to find it presented in amicable terms such as those used by Xi in a meeting with US President Barrack Obama in 2013:

“By the Chinese dream, we seek to have economic prosperity, national renewal and people's well-being. The Chinese dream is about cooperation, development, peace and win-win, and it is connected to the American Dream and the beautiful dreams people in other countries may have.”¹⁰¹

It shares similarities with Theodore Roosevelt's foreign policy to “speak softly and carry a big stick.” Present a generally benign image but let others know the stick is there.

⁹⁸ William A. Callahan (2013), *China Dreams: 20 Visions Of The Future*, United States of America: Oxford University Press, p 162.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Global Times (2017), “Xi instructs army to improve its readiness for war,” Global Times Online November 3, 2017, available at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1073479.shtml> accessed 08/10/2018.

¹⁰¹ Josef Gregory Mahoney (2014), “Interpreting the Chinese dream: an exercise of political hermeneutics.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19(1), p 27.

Fostering cooperation and “win-win” outcomes is in line with how the Chinese dream is typically phrased by Xinhua to other nations proscribing no requirement for other nations to adopt it themselves. It is pluralistic not universal. The Chinese dream contains notions of Chinese exceptionalism, but it does not expect other countries to adopt its model as such. Provided nations refrain from impeding on China’s “core interests” such as its sovereignty claims to the South China Sea, Taiwan, or Tibet, there is space for nations to do as they will without criticism. They can dream their own dreams. Whether this list of “core interests” will grow is of course an open question.

On a very basic level the Chinese dream is about promoting China’s own position in the world to reclaim its place as a major world power – so far China has stopped short of articulating a desire to be the world hegemon. While this is the case a rejuvenated China would be second to none on hard power terms.

Defining the Chinese dream succinctly is a fruitless task other than noting that it is aspirational and the centrality of national rejuvenation to the doctrine. In later sections this project explores how Xinhua frames the Chinese dream to help clarify the murky term – a systematic reading of how the Chinese dream is phrased over time by Xinhua will complement existing literature mostly compiled from an assortment of speeches. Furthermore, there are signs that the Chinese dream is also presented on classically American terms as a concept of individual striving alongside the grand rejuvenation narrative. Although many advocates of the Chinese dream attempt to distance it from crassness of American materialism – by claiming that it is a purely collective dream as opposed to a dream of individual success – portraying the Chinese dream as a concept of individual striving was evident across Xinhua’s reporting from 2013 – 2017 (10% of the relevant total, see Table 2 below). It could be that having an individual aspect to any grand national dream is inescapable given the renown of the well-known American counterpart.

Although the Chinese dream is difficult to clearly define viewing it in relation to other tifa introduces further clarity.

3. Tifa in Context

So far much of the literature on tifa has a tendency to study them in isolation or to engage with the tifa in the context of a given leader. The relationships between tifa are certainly mentioned by scholars like Joseph James Alvaro and William A. Callahan, but I would go further and make the claim that tifa have an established pattern of development and a number of interrelations that make them unique to the China context.

While official discourse is often repetitive, vague and easy to write off as mechanical propaganda – it is the patterns across tifa that yield real insight into policy.¹⁰²

Old Wine, New Bottle?

In *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*, William A. Callahan details a range of competing narratives from a group of officially sanctioned scholars; some of whom such as Hu Angang from Tsinghua University connect the realisation of a Chinese Dream with Mao Ze Dong's initial "great leap forward" strategy of surpassing the United States economically.¹⁰³ This raises an interesting point – how does tifa interrelate between leaders? At the opening of Xi Jinping's speech to the 19th National Congress in October of 2018 he defined the theme of the Congress as the following:

"Remain true to our original aspiration and keep our mission firmly in mind, hold high the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, secure a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, strive for the great success of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, and work tirelessly to realize the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation."¹⁰⁴

What is noticeable is Xi Jinping's inclusion of Deng Xiaoping's "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and Hu Jintao's "moderately prosperous society;" with the addition of his own concept of realising the "Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation." Zheng Wang claims that even that is not really his own:

"Xi's Chinese Dream narrative is like an old wine in a new bottle with the dream's name replacing Jiang and Hu's national rejuvenation, Deng's invigoration of China, and Mao's

¹⁰² Callahan (2016), p 228.

¹⁰³ Callahan (2013), pp 73 – 77.

¹⁰⁴ Xi (2017b).

realization of socialism and communism. Xi also uses patriotic education as a tool just like Jiang did. Thus, the propaganda campaign for the Chinese dream can be considered another round of patriotic education campaign under a different name.”¹⁰⁵

The frequent collocation of the China Dream to national rejuvenation can be seen as a continuation of a narrative embraced by Deng Xiaoping through his “invigoration of China” campaign in the late 1980s – which was maintained to varying degrees by Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.¹⁰⁶ Striving for the national rejuvenation of China actually predates all of these leaders by well over a hundred years. To many Chinese the humiliation of China began with the first of “China’s Unequal Treaties” – the Treaty of Nanjing signed in 1842 in the wake of the Opium Wars – required reading for any young Chinese high school student facing down the notoriously competitive gaokao examinations.¹⁰⁷ The Treaty of Nanjing was just the beginning of a series of defeats at the hands of Western powers and precipitated the eventual carving up of China. It all culminated on the 4th of May 1919, when the May Fourth Movement was started to fight imperialism after the transfer of the ex-German colony of Shandong into Japanese hands by the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War One.

From this nationalistic movement emerged the initial leaders of the CCP, who ironically argued for adopting Western ideas like Marxism-Leninism over home-grown Chinese Confucianism to develop China into an advanced democratic worker’s state. Connecting the CCP’s lineage to the May Fourth Movement fits well with the grand narrative of national rejuvenation. This rejuvenation narrative was also employed by Sun Yet-Sen and Chiang-Kai Shek – with the notable exception of Mao – who predominantly relied on a narrative of class struggle as opposed to appeals to the national humiliation of China.¹⁰⁸ That is not to say that Mao did not also mention the aim of national rejuvenation, only that the class narrative was more evident in his thought especially in later years. Some even dispute that Mao ever said the most quoted line from his speech at Tiananmen Square on October 1, 1949, declaring the creation of The People’s Republic of China: “The Chinese People have stood up.”¹⁰⁹ Regardless, the

¹⁰⁵ Zheng (2013), p 7.

¹⁰⁶ Zheng (2013), pp 5 – 7.

¹⁰⁷ Orville Schell and John Delury (2013), *Wealth and Power: China’s Long March to the Twenty-First Century*, Great Britain: Abacus, pp 12 – 18.

¹⁰⁸ Zheng (2013), pp 1 – 4.

¹⁰⁹ South China Morning Post (2009), “The famous Mao slogan, that he never even used,” South China Morning Post Online September 25, 2009, at <https://www.scmp.com/article/693526/famous-mao-slogan-he-never-even-used> accessed:10/10/2018.

rejuvenation narrative has appeared in Mao's rhetoric through his drive to surpass other nations.

If there is anything that the ideologically vast assortment of 20th century Chinese leaders could all agree on, it is that China was weak and humiliated by foreign invaders from around 1842 until the end of World War Two – even if the solutions proposed by each diverged immensely. National humiliation laces the thought of many of China's leaders across this century and last.

As with Hu Jintao's "harmonious society," Xi's China dream is realized via building a moderately prosperous society by 2020 with the realization of a "great modern socialist country" by 2050 – both contain recognition of the same two centennial goals.¹¹⁰ The date 2049 is of course an important one; realizing the dream of building a great modern country one hundred years after the founding of the People's Republic of China is a nice clean finish that fits succinctly with the grand rejuvenation narrative. In many ways the Chinese dream is simply a rephrasing of creating a "harmonious society" as they share the same core objectives. Each is equally vague – and concerned with achieving a normative objective in the future that is conveniently abstract in the present and cannot be proven wrong. They both concern burying the notion that China is a developing nation subject to the whims of advanced Western nations.

An interesting text published in 2006 by the government sanctioned Foreign Languages Press, *The China Dream: China in Peaceful Development* by Li Junru, one of the first texts to discuss the Chinese dream, offers another interesting take:

"The "China Dream" for realization of industrialization and modernization originated at a time when China was being invaded by big powers and unable to protect itself. China was defeated during the Opium War of 1840. As China moved to the modern period, it entered a process of social change aimed at saving the nation and strengthening the country through industrialisation."¹¹¹

Here we can see the Chinese Dream dated all the way back to the Opium war of 1840 giving it a similar birthday to the start of China's humiliation. Not only is the Chinese Dream so drawn from the rejuvenation narrative to allegedly share the same birthday, it is even retroactively imposed on that same narrative to reinterpret it. The aim of industrialization may have emerged at this time, however, the Chinese dream was obviously not articulated in any sense. Tifa – like all slogans – originate from a mixture of important historical events that capture the national

¹¹⁰ Xi (2017), pp 24 – 26.

¹¹¹ Li (2006), p 26.

memory, unique cultural characteristics, and the ideological inclinations of the group or person who phrases them. Orville Schell and John Delury claim that the concept of China's humiliation has "become transmuted into a positive force – transformed from a depressant into a stimulant – in the construction of a new and modern national identity."¹¹² Projecting an inherently aspirational concept back on a period of national humiliation, especially an idea of a grand national dream, supports this concept of turning national trauma into something positive.

The crucial point I am making here is that the Chinese dream does not only flow from history, it also plays a role in interpreting that history. All ideological concepts drastically alter how events in the past are seen. The Chinese dream is largely old wine, new bottle – but it also a more *positive* and *confident* reiteration of what came before.¹¹³ The bottle can drastically change the taste of the wine, as the legions of companies who spend vast amounts of money on fancy packaging can attest. This shift in tone is not to be understated and it is in a sense a healthy way to deal with the historical injustice of China's past humiliation.

That is not to say that the Chinese dream is only a positive concept of rejuvenating the country and realising lofty goals, much of it is about reaffirming CCP supremacy. For Sujian Guo, tifa such as the "Four Modernizations" phrased during the post Mao era, or the Chinese dream, all proceed from the basis of the "Four Cardinal Principles"¹¹⁴ (see Table 1). Only the Party has a monopoly on truth. Only the Party can lead a new, invigorated Chinese nation state towards its correct place in history. He is not wrong. One *clearly stated* requirement of realising a "moderately prosperous society" or the "Chinese dream" is adherence to the Party – front and centre. As can be seen from the extract at the beginning of Xi's speech to the 19th National congress, remaining true to the "original aspiration and mission" of the Communist Party is a prerequisite of achieving the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation. All such aspirational signature tifa act as a reaffirmation of the "Four Cardinal Principles" and a commonality across them is the reiteration of the supremacy, or more importantly the necessity, of The Party.

All of these tifa communicate one bottom-line: *you need* The CCP to make China strong.

Part of the reason why political slogans in the Chinese context have got such a lasting impact is that they are passed down through the successors of government because the ruling party

¹¹² Schell and Delury (2013), p 14.

¹¹³ Zheng (2013), p 8.

¹¹⁴ Sujian Guo (2013), *Chinese Politics And Government*, London: Routledge., pp 164 – 165.

never changes.¹¹⁵ As tifa are part of a leader's legacy and are transmitted down through generations of leadership, they are clearly distinguishable from slogans in many other polities that lack this level of continuity. It is this feature that allows tifa to have a discernible pattern of development; they are a product of authoritarianism and serve to justify it. The CCP is perfectly aware that economic growth is likely to slow down to some degree¹¹⁶ and that expectations are high after decades of improved living standards which has been starkly uneven – the stated “New Normal” of medium to high economic growth based off of innovation has been acknowledged as a necessity to keep moving China forward.¹¹⁷ In short, the CCP perceives the need for another sales point to enforce its legitimacy beyond the delivery of economic objectives that still remains central to the agenda. Appeals to a positive revamped rejuvenation narrative in the Chinese dream makes sense in this context.

Although tifa are connected and there is continuity from leader to leader, it would be a mistake to view them as simply being a continuation of rephrased, static, principles. Xi's addition of “culture” to Hu Jintao's “Three Confidences” in the “system, theory, and path” (see table 1) of China's development may seem small, however it demonstrates an ambulatory aspect to how slogans develop and signals a refocussing of priorities. Equating faith in Chinese culture with the sacrosanct faith in the path and system can be connected with real world actions. Also, it must be remembered that these changes can be cumulative.

In 2012 the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television banned foreign television from 7.30PM to 10.00PM during prime viewing hours and decreed that such shows cannot account for more than 25% of all viewing hours.¹¹⁸ More recently, hip-hop has been the subject of a state crackdown for creating “a tool for people to vent their anger, misery, complaints” that has no place in China.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, hip-hop has been a medium utilized by the PLA in videos to attract new recruits¹²⁰ and in other places to promote Xi Jinping's agenda. Culture is not seen

¹¹⁵ Wang (2017), p 45.

¹¹⁶ See Thomas Piketty (2014), *Capital In The Twenty-First Century*, Arthur Gold Hammer (Translator.), United States: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p 93. Piketty notes that “the only historical examples of noticeably rapid growth – 3 – 4 percent or more – occurred in countries that were experiencing accelerated catch-up with other countries.” Growth has historically slowed after catch-up.

¹¹⁷ China Daily (2017), “New normal in economic development,” China Daily Online October 5, 2017, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpnationalcongress/2017-10/05/content_32869258.htm accessed: 12/08/2018.

¹¹⁸ BBC News (2012), “China bans foreign TV shows during prime time,” BBC News Online February 14, 2012, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-17022981> accessed 09/09/2018.

¹¹⁹ Reuters (2018), “China takes aim at hip-hop, saying ‘low-taste content’ must stop,” Reuters Online January 22, 2018, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-censorship-hiphop/china-takes-aim-at-hip-hop-saying-low-taste-content-must-stop-idUSKBN1FB139> accessed: 09/09/2018.

¹²⁰ People's Daily (2016), “China's PLA army enlists rap-style music video to recruit young soldiers,” posted on YouTube May 2, 2016, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTdOnDSPZ_Q accessed: 09/09/2018.

as “low-taste” when it is on message. Xi’s emphasis on controlling culture has been followed with real world actions. As has been astutely pointed out with by Sujian Guo for other tifa – the “Four Confidences” very closely resemble the “Four Cardinal Principles.” This forms a rational basis to restrict culture to those deemed appropriate by the CCP, which it is actively doing and hip-hop is an easy target given its connection to the United States. That’s not to say that words anticipate reality perfectly – but when you have a development of tifa as well as corresponding actions in line with those tifa ignoring them becomes negligent. At the very least a shift in tifa reflects a change in priorities for China’s leadership.¹²¹

Tifa are developed through time and the most notable ones are passed on from leader to leader. In a sense, the development of tifa is analogous to case law, with certain principles being adopted and discarded, even if they contain inherent similarities. When viewed in context they become less vague and carry far more significance showing a trajectory over time. The Chinese dream is a positive twist on the established rejuvenation narrative, a repackaging of the economic vision for a new era of slowing growth, and a reaffirmation of the necessity of the CCP. It also adds an individual dimension of personal striving to this grand narrative.

Tifa can progress and from a liberal stand point retrogress. Nothing in the world remains still.

From Biding Strength to the Chinese Dream

The most important shift the Chinese dream is claimed to hail globally is a change in foreign policy from “Keeping a Low Profile” towards “Striving for Achievement.” This shift, if true, represents a marked change in Chinese foreign policy from the cautious approach taken by previous leaders. The object of this thesis is to ascertain the extent to which the Chinese dream is presented as a globally orientated tifa across Xinhua’s reporting – of course some element of global orientation was always going to be found. The aim is to gauge the extent.

If the Chinese dream is presented as a term of global engagement, it would link China’s ambitions of national rejuvenation to actively participating in world affairs. Such a stance would herald a shift from Deng Xiaoping’s “bide your time, hide your strength” that dictated an inwardly focussed foreign policy approach aimed at not disturbing the global power balance. Equating the dream of national rejuvenation with a global dream would be a major shift in

¹²¹ Sørensen (2015), p 55.

Chinese foreign policy from that before the 21st Century, or from other tifa that were China centric; and essentially stated that China would develop while minding its own business.

Yan Xuetong claims that Xi Jinping is moving Chinese foreign policy from “Keeping a Low Profile” as encapsulated by Deng Xiaoping’s aforementioned tifa towards the realisation of the Chinese dream – which contains a new foreign policy of “Striving for Achievement.”¹²² Moving towards a global focus did start under Jiang Zemin and continued to some extent through Hu Jintao’s push towards “peaceful development.”¹²³ It is claimed that Xi went further and formalized the paradigm shift towards Striving for Achievement.¹²⁴ The main significance of the Chinese dream regarding foreign policy is the change in strategy from Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement;¹²⁵ of which the Chinese dream is the furthest progression to date building on what tifa came before.

Again, the nuance comes from being a more confident and assertive reiteration as opposed to being perfectly novel. Camilla T.N. Sørensen phrases this shift in foreign policy based off of a careful analysis of speeches from Xi and other top leaders:

“...Chinese foreign policy leaders’ speeches and statements on the ‘Chinese dream’ as they relate it to developments in China’s international role and foreign policy strategy are, firstly, that China under Xi aims to take on more international responsibilities, but also to ‘shape’ the international system to a higher degree and increasingly present Chinese ideas and solutions to international conflicts and crises. Secondly, that China wants respect and to be treated on equal footing, and, thirdly, that China will never compromise on China’s sovereignty and core interests.”¹²⁶

Both Yan and Sørensen connect realizing the Chinese dream towards this new kind of assertive foreign policy that wishes to shape the world as opposed to quietly building strength. The realities of launching ambitious infrastructure projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, that aim to connect 65 countries along the old silk road, one of the largest economic corridors in the world,¹²⁷ is that it is a large play. The Qing dynasty philosopher and official Wei Yuan in his work *Sea Powers* centred on the victorious British Royal Navy in 1843 noticed the mutual

¹²² Yan Xuetong (2014), pp 165 – 166.

¹²³ Jian Zhang (2015), "China's new foreign policy under Xi Jinping: towards 'Peaceful Rise 2.0'?", *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27(1), (2015), pp 7 - 9.

¹²⁴ Yan (2014), 160.

¹²⁵ Sørensen (2015), p 54.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p 65.

¹²⁷ Yong, Wang (2016), "Offensive for defensive: the belt and road initiative and China's new grand strategy," *The Pacific Review* 29(3), pp 455-463, p 456.

dependency between soldiers and trade – and that with vast interests overseas came a need to be able to protect those interests.¹²⁸

A country cannot achieve that aim by hiding and China has invested extensively in its navy in recent years; a central theme of the film *Wolf Warrior 2* was the ability to project power into Africa to safeguard Chinese citizens. Furthermore, it has carried on extensively with its policy of isolating Taiwan and enforcing the “One China” policy. The well written about conflicts in the South China Sea escalated under Xi’s watch and previous olive branches towards Japan on the issue by Hu Jintao have been rescinded. Achieving the stated aims of Chinese reunification and the Belt and Road Initiative is that they require the utilization of China’s growing power to realize its national interests.¹²⁹ Many of the foreign policy stances asserted under Xi are consistent with what Sørensen derived from his speeches of taking on more global responsibilities and consolidating core interests.

Of course, this new adoption of Striving for Achievement can hardly be called a departure in a certain sense. Deng Xiaoping did not necessarily intend that China would hide its strength forever – and the very concept of “biding your time” implies that such a stance is temporary. From a pragmatic stand point Keeping a Low Profile made sense when China was weak relative to other major powers. Throwing China’s weight around while its economy was significantly weaker than the relative power of its US or Japanese competitors in the late eighties would not have been pragmatic; reassuring others that China’s growth would not change the global equation makes sense given China’s relative power at that time. Given states are very sensitive to power gaps the very concept of hiding power seems limited.¹³⁰ China’s rising strength has not been overlooked by anyone – and theories like the China Threat Theory were emerging in the late 1990s. China has clearly been subject to heightened international press coverage over the last few decades, its growth in power featured frequently during the 2016 Presidential elections in the United States and through the present trade war between The US and China.

What Peaceful rise and Keeping a Low Profile do achieve is offering a degree of reassurance to foreign powers that China is not going to be a threat; even if its power could never really be hidden. Literally hiding capabilities was probably never the point – limiting the possibility of unilateral actions to stunt Chinese growth was more the aim.

¹²⁸ Schell and Delury (2013), pp 32 – 36.

¹²⁹ Jian (2015), p 6.

¹³⁰ Yan (2014), p 159.

An interesting concept is whether the new doctrine of Striving for Achievement is revisionist. Yan Xuetong notes that achieving national rejuvenation is contingent on catching up with the United States and that a competition for the number one spot was inevitable.¹³¹ Short of a war caused by that competition – just because China wants power does not necessarily equate with revisionism. Xi Jinping championed globalization in a heralded speech at Davos in 2017 claiming that economic globalization was not the source of the world’s troubles;¹³² a stark contrast to the United States that has adopted a weary stance and imposed or threatened tariffs. As the concept of free trade has theoretically underpinned the US led world order to date this would make Xi a strange form of revisionist – although arguing for economic globalism does not mean China aims to refrain from changing the current order in other ways.

Proponents of the shift in policy towards Striving for Achievement argue that Chinese leaders recognise that China’s “restoration of the country’s great power status require a peaceful and stable international environment.”¹³³ They argue that the game has changed – that competing for world power status has changed, that Striving for Achievement is distinguishable from the imperialist policies of Germany prior to World War One or Japan before World War Two, and that conflict will not result so long as China’s new found assertion is implemented carefully.¹³⁴ The goal is winning allies through building up state power without war or dramatic overthrow. Others argue that framing the argument as status-quo liberalism *versus* Chinese revisionism is itself simplistic and that China is in fact doing both; it is integrating into the American led order while at the same time revising it.¹³⁵ China’s ardent defence of economic globalization while simultaneously arguing for internet sovereignty against universal notions of free speech would back up this take. Still – surely China would need to be either more status-quo or more revisionist? It is often perceived as being a revisionist threat to the liberal global order which could be more than just envy and nostalgia among Western states lusty to define the rules based international order.

¹³¹ Ibid, p 164 - 165.

¹³² Xi Jinping (2017a), “Full Text of Xi Jinping keynote at the World Economic Forum,” delivered at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland January 17, 2017, published online at <https://america.cgtn.com/2017/01/17/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum> accessed: 06/10/2018.

¹³³ Jian (2015), p 8.

¹³⁴ Yan (2014), p 184.

¹³⁵ Peter Marcus Kristensen and Pippa Morgan (2018), “Leadership with Chinese Characteristics,” *Fudan University and Springer Nature Pte LTD*, p 6; Amitav Acharya (2017), “After liberal hegemony: the advent of a multiplex world order,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 31(3), pp 280 – 283.

Advocates of this view argue that China's undermining of multi-party democracy underpins the real way that China acts as a revisionist nation.¹³⁶ If the status-quo really is the promotion of democratic values – by presenting a credible alternative China is being significantly revisionist in the ways that count.

Ideological differences across the 20th century always precipitated serious conflict, even though the Cold War never reached a direct confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union the constant risk of global obliteration can hardly be seen as sustainable or desirable. There have been peaceful transfers of hegemonic status in history – two of the most notable peaceful transfers in power was the example of Great Britain to the United States in the early 20th century and from the Soviet Union to the United States at the close of the cold war in 1991.¹³⁷ The former concerns countries that shared a lot of culture and ideological values, while the latter was novel through the existence of nuclear deterrents and the internal disintegration of the Soviet Union without a need for resolution through conflict. If China is to become the number one global power everybody's preference would undoubtedly be for a transfer akin to that between the United States and Great Britain.

How China frames its growing power through the articulation of its aspirations can help inform on its intentions. Whether the Chinese dream is a substantially revisionist concept cannot be covered here, but it is relevant to note that it has been interpreted by a cadre of scholars as representing an outward policy shift which has formed the basis for the research parameters of this project.

The Voice of China

The content analysis presented here of Xinhua English language articles is designed to view how China frames its rise to the world in the new era of the Chinese dream and measure the extent to which it represents an outward shift. So far, literature on China's shift from the inwardly focussed Keeping Low Profile towards Striving for Achievement presents valuable insights often derived from an array of speeches – this paper aims to supplement these insights by viewing how this message is relayed over time using relevant China dream Xinhua articles from 2013 – 2017.

¹³⁶ Yong Deng (2014), "China: the post-responsible power," *The Washington Quarterly* 37(4), p 125.

¹³⁷ James C MacDougall (2017), "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?," *Parameters* 47(2), pp 113 – 116.

Coverage of the Chinese dream that represent such a shift would focus on issues such as China's projects overseas, bi-lateral treaties or the wider benefits of cooperating with China if this were the case. Of course, as mentioned prior, it was always going to be found that the Chinese dream was to some extent globally focussed.

The crucial aim is to measure the *extent of coverage* that has a global focus against other evident frames. A discussion and justification of what frames were chosen is discussed in the following sections.

Furthermore, this study aims to measure how China communicates its message to the world – not how successful it is in convincing world audiences of the merits of its platform. The theoretical basis for all analyses such as this one is *constructivism*; where “the focus is on exploring the role of discourses in mediating and constructing social reality.”¹³⁸ The underlying assumption is that how elites “understand, contest and construct their role – their identity – in the international system is crucial for the development of foreign policy.”¹³⁹ It is worth studying discourse because it reveals insight into political reality even if the findings can be empirically difficult.

China's English language media is a good object for this kind of study as the political terms expressed are “imbued with complex layers of meaning related to China's political ideology, its national identity and culture, as well as its place in the world.”¹⁴⁰ As English is the closest to resembling a truly international language, English speaking media is a natural vehicle to communicate this message globally. English media outlets such as Xinhua are well controlled presenting a united ideological message while at the same time being freer of the insecurities of engaging on certain topics that comes with media that is domestically geared. Furthermore, given China's recent amalgamation of media to present a concerted “Voice of China” the current leadership seems very keen to push this message.

Appearing benign – or better yet a mature responsible power to be taken seriously – seems to be a message The CCP is desperately attempting to communicate its global vision. Xinhua's spending on news increased by over 18% from 2013 – 2017, rising from 4.9 billion yuan to 5.8 billion yuan,¹⁴¹ as communicating the governments perspective to the world has become of increased importance. It may be propaganda but it can tell us more about Chinese elites and

¹³⁸ Sørensen (2015), p 57.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Alvaro (2013), p 147.

¹⁴¹ Ma and Thomas (2018).

their political identity than simply ignoring what they're attempting to say. Any approach that studies discourse should equally be critical to avoid swallowing wholesale any disingenuous self-serving message – a difficult line to walk.

4. Method

The aim of this analysis is to ascertain what major themes the Chinese dream is associated with in reporting from Xinhua. My central goal is to discover how the dream is framed to Western audiences and what this can tell us about the nation's stated wants and ambitions.

In this study the method of content analysis was used to analyse 1906 China dream articles sourced from Factiva using a keyword search. Content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use.”¹⁴² It initially emerged as a technique for quantitative newspaper analysis that was extended to a range of texts including hymns, songs, and speeches.¹⁴³ In the modern age – content analysis has expanded to a vast array of texts – including surveys, interviews, focus groups, manuals, print media, social media, laws, videogames, and of course online publications.¹⁴⁴ It is a flexible research technique appropriate for measuring the prevalence of themes across a large number of texts. It is used widely in research on mass communication.¹⁴⁵

As noted in the introduction, the inspiration for this project came from Yi Edward Yang and Xinsheng Liu's “*The China ‘Threat’ through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992-2006*,”¹⁴⁶ which involved a keyword search to ascertain the prevalence of the China Threat Theory in US reporting. Naturally, the Chinese dream is a slightly different concept¹⁴⁷ so the thematic frames were adapted to be suitable for the Chinese dream.

Part of the reason why the thematic frames were developed from those used to analyse the China Threat Theory is because it is oppositional to the Chinese dream – the former is anxious about China's growing economic clout – while the latter is aspirational about a surging China.

¹⁴² Krippendorff (2013), 24.

¹⁴³ Krippendorff (2013), pp 14 – 23; Satu Elo and Helvi Kyngäs (2008), “The qualitative content analysis process,” *Journal of advanced nursing*, 62(1), p 107.

¹⁴⁴ See Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon (2005), “Three approaches to qualitative content analysis,” *Qualitative health research* 15(9), p 1279; Justin Grimmer and Brandon M. Stewart (2013), “Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts,” *Political analysis* 21(3), pp 267 – 269; Krippendorff (2013), pp 14 – 23; Paul D. Skalski, Kimberly A. Neuendorf and Julie A. Cajigas (2017), “Content Analysis in the Interactive Media Age,” in Neuendorf, Kimberly A., *The content analysis guidebook*, Sage, pp 202 – 203. Interestingly, content analysis has also gained prominence in a large number of disciplines including nursing, psychology and propaganda studies.

¹⁴⁵ Matthew Lombard, Jennifer Snyder-Duch, and Cheryl Campanella Bracken (2002), “Content analysis in mass communication: Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability,” *Human communication research* 28(4), p 587.

¹⁴⁶ See Yang and Liu (2012).

¹⁴⁷ There is a relationship between the Chinese dream and the China Threat theory. Both are concerned with China's rise, aspirations and objectives. This is why some of the media frames are relevant to the two respectively – tifa like the Chinese dream and peaceful development are responses to the China Threat Theory.

The following sections detail a step-by-step approach to conducting this content analysis as well as a justification of the decisions made. This has been done to make the study as clear and as *replicable* as possible; any researcher should be able to emulate it following this method section. Next, any content analysis must be proven to be *reliable* and *valid* – if a content analysis cannot prove these two elements are satisfied the findings cannot be regarded as empirically grounded.

Finally, I will critique the methods of other papers against the method presented here as there are some comments on the existing content analysis literature worth making.

Finding the Dataset and Unitizing

The first step in creating a content analysis is defining a clear dataset. After reviewing available options my choice was to use the Factiva database to source all published Xinhua China dream articles between 2013-2017. This date period was selected to cover Xi Jinping's first five years in office after he assumed power on the 15th of November, 2012. To my knowledge, Factiva contains a selection of Xinhua articles that are provided to Reuters and the Dow Jones by Xinhua News Agency for English speaking audiences and is unfiltered.¹⁴⁸ These articles, moreover, are commonly used by Western News outlets in their reporting even if they are not an exhaustive sample of all articles published. They serve as a wire for the wire.¹⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, Xinhua is aware of this fact and has some understanding of what this selection of articles is often used for by Dow Jones. As my central aim is to capture how Xinhua presents the “Chinese Dream” to English speaking audiences, this population of articles is particularly interesting given their broader use by other outlets as a framing tool.

To access the corpus of articles used in this project follow the steps below:

- a. Log into the main Factiva database at:

<https://global.factiva.com/factiva/login/login.asp?productname=global>

¹⁴⁸ I emailed Factiva requesting information on how they process the content from Xinhua and received the following reply: “Xinhua News Agency’ provides Factiva with full text but selected coverage of its content. Content provided to us includes economic, political, finance, trade news and market analysis. Factiva publishes what Xinhua provides, and does not filter its content, unless it is found to be third party content. All articles published on Factiva.com are provided by Xinhua itself.”

¹⁴⁹ Henry Acland (2018), interview conducted by Adam Osborne-Smith, phone interview, Wellington, conducted on: 20/03/2018. Henry Acland used to work for Xinhua's English language division – he provided valuable insights as to how articles provided by Xinhua are disseminated by Reuters to Western news outlets. His contribution aided this project significantly.

- b. Go to the “Source” tab and select “Xinhua News Agency (China).”
- c. In the search bar type in the key word search term “*dream AND (China OR Chinese)*.”
- d. Select the date range from the start of 2013 to the end of 2017, which will reveal 2060 articles (of which 1906 articles are included in the study excluding duplicates) and is the corpus of this analysis.
- e. Sort in order of oldest first for ease of access (unfortunately a randomised option that can be returned to later is not available).

The reason why the search term was phrased as above was to limit the search to articles pertaining to China; but to also catch formulations of the Chinese dream that do not collocate within a word of the core search term “dream.”¹⁵⁰ Each article found must contain the word “dream” and either “China” or “Chinese.” All 2060 articles located on Factiva are initially included in the study. This helps avoid the error of omission¹⁵¹ which involves missing relevant material – and after sifting through the articles there are a large number of articles that need to be coded out as irrelevant. Unfortunately, a large number of irrelevant articles had to be included in order to catch all of the different formulations that are relevant to how the Chinese dream is phrased. The “error of commission,” or drawing in too many irrelevant articles through such a broad search term,¹⁵² was unavoidable to capture the true breadth of a term like the Chinese dream. This problem mostly means the creation of more work at the coding stage and is considered more in the section on validity.

The terms “China dream” and “Chinese dream” are used interchangeably here – although William A. Callaghan claims there is a slight difference in what they mean¹⁵³ – both formulations are considered relevant to this study and were used interchangeably for the most part by Xinhua in the body of articles studied.

¹⁵⁰ Examples of this occurring include “China’s world dream,” “China’s space dream,” or “...achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is China’s greatest dream in modern times.” To miss an article solely because there was not collocation within a word between “China” and “dream” would potentially omit units. Fortunately, “dream” seems to have few politically acceptable synonyms (delusion, fancy, fantasy, illusion, trance, mental picture, speculation, impression, dead trip etc) that could act as a rephrasing of the core tifa in English.

¹⁵¹ Krippendorff (2013), p 345.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ See William A. Callahan (2015), “Identity and security in China: the negative soft power of the China dream,” *Politics* 35(3-4), p 224. The official English translation of “*Zhongguo meng*” shifted from “The China Dream” to “The Chinese dream” in March 2013 – this was because the latter was seen by some Chinese scholars and officials as less threatening and more organic. That does not mean this stance was adopted by Xinhua reporters and translators uniformly.

Each individual article is considered a unit of measurement. Some articles are longer and may have had more impact than others, however, the objective of this research project is to ascertain how the Chinese dream is portrayed in a number of articles over time, so unitising each data point as individual articles is a natural delineation.¹⁵⁴

Coding

Now that the data set and each unit size have been determined, the next step is to code the articles into a set thematic frame; which are *Military/Strategic*, *Political/Domestic*, *Political/World*, *Personal/Individual*, and *Irrelevant* to study. Each article *must be coded into one thematic dimension* – even though many articles may exhibit more than one theme. Coders should be instructed in unclear cases to ask: “Is the theme contained in the title and discussed with a much greater frequency than other themes?” Next, they should look to which theme is most discussed and sets the general tenor of the article. If it is still not clear, coders need to place the article that is first mentioned. Coders should follow the steps below¹⁵⁵ and stop when a clear coding option emerges:

1. Theme is mentioned in the headline and is most discussed (“most discussed” was described to coders as one theme featuring in over half the article *or* clearly being the most discussed theme).
2. Theme is most discussed.
3. First mentioned in article.

There is a flow chart attached in the appendix that coders are to refer to while conducting the coding process to ensure consistency. It is recommended that they code with this chart in view to minimise basic errors.

¹⁵⁴ See Krippendorff (2013), pp 108 – 111.

¹⁵⁵ This system of coding was derived from Yi Edward Yang and Xinsheng Liu’s *The China ‘Threat’ through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992-2006*, who used steps two and three to code conflicting articles into one theme. I added step one to the test – this decision was made to give the headline more salience. Headlines are vital in guiding the thematic content of the article and are sometimes the only part people read. See Yang and Liu (2012), pp 702 – 703.

Thematic Frames

Attached below is a list of the thematic frames with a general outline and some example elements required for an article to be coded into it. Each theme was initially derived Yi Edward Yang and Xingsheng Liu's paper, "*The China 'Threat' through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992-2006*"; and then developed further after reading a number of articles to ascertain what themes were most evident.

Thematic frames are based on news frames which are used by journalists to "simplify, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events."¹⁵⁶ Frames are patterns of making sense of the world.¹⁵⁷ Some of the thematic frames in this study are commonly used to measure the prevalence of the China Threat Theory in reporting from the United States,¹⁵⁸ with others developed to be specific to the Chinese dream. If a pattern occurs over several articles it can be interpreted as a media frame.¹⁵⁹ The analysis focusses on themes but I call them thematic frames as it was a useful term for categorisation and well-captured the inspiration behind them. The terms theme and frame are closely related and are not worth too much scholarly angst – they are often used interchangeably in ordinary speech. These themes are discernible patterns across the body of articles studied, that were first developed from the articles, then imposed systematically across them.

The two major themes in this study are Political/World and Political/Domestic. What these thematic frames were designed to capture was the extent the Chinese dream was presented as being concerned with China internally, versus being a term of global engagement. This was to detect whether the Chinese dream was portrayed consistently as a term of global engagement, which would support the literature claiming a shift from Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement, or whether Xinhua portrayed the Chinese dream as being more concerned with China internally.

The Military/Strategic thematic frame was designed to measure how militaristic Xinhua's reporting on the Chinese dream is, namely, to determine whether realizing the Chinese dream involved an emphasis on flaunting China's raw hard power assets. Again, a sign of an assertive and globally active China but not necessarily an indication of global engagement. A strong

¹⁵⁶ Zengjun Peng (2004), "Representation of China: An across time analysis of coverage in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 14(1), p 57.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Brüggemann (2014), "Between frame setting and frame sending: How journalists contribute to news frames," *Communication Theory*, 24(1), pp 62 – 63.

¹⁵⁸ Yang and Liu (2012), pp 697 – 699; Zhengjun (2007), pp 57 – 60.

¹⁵⁹ Jörg Matthes and Matthias Kohring (2008), "The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity," *Journal of communication* 58(2), pp 274 – 275.

focus on militaristic reporting would suggest the dream was not as soft as the literature suggests and that the dream involves a strong degree of intimidation.

Lastly, some writers have drawn parallels between the Chinese dream and the famously individualistic American dream. A common view is that the Chinese dream is portrayed as being concerned with the nation as opposed to individual ambition.¹⁶⁰ The Individual Dream/Personal Dream thematic frame was designed to see whether Xinhua's coverage frames the Chinese dream as being an idea of individual hope and opportunity on terms similar to the American Dream, which could be discerned from the articles early on.

Initially, the aim was to separate political ideology and economics into separate themes¹⁶¹ but this was not possible because economic issues were so *incredibly intertwined* in Xinhua's reporting on the Chinese dream. Separating them was impossible to do systematically in any way that would reach the requirements of reliability. I found this in itself to be a very interesting finding – economic concerns are so central to the Chinese dream that trying to distil them from other themes was hopelessly fraught. As a result, I was forced to collapse politics, ideology, and economics into the two major themes of Political/World and Political/Domestic. Economic concerns in Xinhua's reporting are so incredibly connected to the Chinese dream they are simply ubiquitous across all categories.

Below is a description of each thematic frame and an outline of the kind of articles to be coded into each frame.

a. Military/Strategic

This frame was designed to measure the prevalence of military themes in Xinhua's reporting of the Chinese dream. The following types of articles were coded into this theme:

- Article mentions the China dream in relation to national security or mention of existential military threats such as terrorism or instability
- Militaristic appeals to patriotism or highly charged nationalism
- Presence of military hardware in relation to realising the China dream
- Mention of the PLA or other state security organs in relation to the China dream

¹⁶⁰ See Zheng (2013), p 8; Sørensen (2015), p 56; Callahan (2016), p 235.

¹⁶¹ This was the approach taken in Yang and Liu (2012). This approach could not be taken here – and represents the main difference between the frames used in this paper and theirs. In short, the frames could not be neatly transposed given the nature of the data set and research parameters.

- Expansionist/territorially assertive issues eg. Taiwanese unification, South China Sea; Hong Kong, Xinjiang, or Tibetan separatism
- Strategic concerns regarding territorial integrity
- Anything regarding maintaining sovereignty and internal security

b. Political/Domestic

Articles were coded into this thematic frame if the predominant theme is related to ideological or economic issues within China. Some examples include:

- Domestic economic development objectives or achievements eg. promotion of well-being of elderly care services in China, benefits of better transportation system
- Development of high-technology in China
- Domestic modernization goals
- Promotion of collective values eg. virtue of Chinese workers working hard
- Business stories
- Promotion of China model or ideological principles in a purely China context

c. Political/World

Articles were coded into this thematic frame if the predominant theme is related to ideological or economic issues in the international realm. Articles in this theme will often mention one or a number of other countries and be concerned with interests outside of China – examples may include:

- Promotion of the China model or ideological principles to external nations
- Participation of China in international political bodies and development of international bodies
- Focus on international development objectives eg. “One Belt, One Road”
- Emphasis on Asian development or sharing china’s economic miracle and developing a global community
- Bi-lateral or multi-lateral trade deals
- Promotion of Chinese language overseas
- Relationships between China and other nations both economically and politically

d. Individual/Personal

Articles coded into this theme must focus on an individual dream with reference to a greater concept of a Chinese dream. The article must be predominantly concerned with specific individuals or discussions of individual dreams in relation to the Chinese dream. Examples could include:

- A story that focusses on the success or actions of an individual (but not high political figures such as Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, members of The Standing Committee of the Politburo, or other such figures) as an exemplar of fulfilling the China dream
- A virtuous individual held up as an example of the Chinese dream but not high political figures
- Discussion of individual dreams in relation to the Chinese dream
- The life of an individual improving their circumstances in a modern China
- Promise of individual prosperity upon migrating to China eg. “Land of Opportunity” in the classic American sense
- Discussion of the Chinese dream as an individual dream
- Be wary of examples where an individual mentions pursuing dreams, and is from China, but there is no mention at all of the a greater collective “Chinese dream.” The following example should be coded as *irrelevant to study* as it does not mention the Chinese dream:

“Huang was also active in charitable causes. He volunteered to teach in southwest China’s Tibetan Autonomous Region and encouraged impoverished local students to pursue their dreams.”

e. Irrelevant to Study

Any articles that contain the words China and dream, but are too diffuse to be considered a China dream article as in the example given above, were coded as irrelevant. Different formulations of the China dream (eg. “China’s world dream,” “The great dream of the Chinese people,” or the extension of the China dream into the “Asia-Pacific dream”) are relevant. The key commonality tying these is that they are connected to a national Chinese dream. The following example should be coded as *relevant* as the dream referred to is that of a national Chinese dream:

“Throughout history, the rise of a new major economy has always led to fierce competition for hegemony among major players. A fast-developing China, however, will not go down that old

road. The *dream* it pursues is that of national rejuvenation, rather than one featuring colonialism, militarism or hegemony.”

Articles expressing the following should be coded as irrelevant:

- Anything that comes up as a “news advisory” and is not a proper article (just talks about other Xinhua articles)
- The terms “China” and “dream” are too diffuse for it to be considered a China dream article or no greater collective Chinese dream is mentioned
- A “dream” that is mentioned in an individual sense without any mention of the greater collective Chinese dream as in the Huang example given above

Reliability

A vital requirement of content analysis is that the data is *reliable*. Reliability “rests on the assurance it provides that data are obtained independent of the measuring event, instrument or person;”¹⁶² essentially a content analysis is reliable if there is evidence to support that the framework is objective. A content analysis must show “stability” and “replicability” in order to be reliable.¹⁶³ Stability is the degree to which processes are unchangeable meaning the “same coder can get the same results try after try,”¹⁶⁴ while replicability concerns whether *different* coders would obtain different results when applying the thematic frames to the same texts. To ensure these requirements are met, this content analysis will use two independent coders who have categorised a randomised sample of one-in-seventeen articles starting from article number 1208 (these numbers were chosen at random by my supervisor). The aim is to achieve a high level of intercoder agreement to show that the analysis is objective. A high intercoder agreement rate rests at the heart of reliability and content analysis itself; if an analysis cannot be proven reliable according to this method it cannot be trusted.¹⁶⁵

As far as a clear reliability threshold is concerned the line in the literature is fuzzy – adhering to best practice in a number of different ways is what is required to be sufficiently reliable – in

¹⁶² Krippendorff (2013), p 267.

¹⁶³ Steve Stemler (2001), “An overview of content analysis,” *Practical assessment, research & evaluation* 7(17), p 142; Krippendorff (2013), pp 270 – 272.

¹⁶⁴ Stemler (2001), p 142.

¹⁶⁵ See James W. Potter and Deborah Levine-Donnerstein (1999), “Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis,” *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 27(3), pp 271 – 273; Stemler (2001), p 142; Lombard et al (2002), pp 587 – 588; Knut De Swert “Calculating inter-coder reliability in media content analysis using Krippendorff’s Alpha,” *Center for Politics and Communication* (2012), p 1; Krippendorff (2013), pp 267 – 270.

addition to mathematically proving a high level of intercoder agreement. Nothing is epistemologically seamless but it is important to cut down on seams.

A total of 191 articles of the total set were coded by the independent coders or 10.02% of the overall articles studied – a sample size of at least ten percent is regarded as being in line with best practice.¹⁶⁶ Given that this project had two narrow themes (Military/Strategic, Individual/Personal) alongside two broader themes (Political/World, Political/Domestic), anything less than ten percent would have been unacceptable. A larger reliability sample would have been desirable to better detect the two narrower themes; although a dataset of 1906 articles is large and as such pursuing this line further was unfeasible – 10.02% is sufficient to base reliability even if it is not an ideal number. If more resources were available, I would have aimed for a reliability sample of around fifteen to twenty percent given the large number of articles analysed. Using two additional independent coders is one more than necessary and is a step further than the minimum.

In order to measure inter-coder agreement, this project will be relying on Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient, following which, if there is a high level of agreement, the analysis will be proven reliable and the thematic categories systematic. Krippendorff makes a compelling case as to why his coefficient should be used, especially over using a percentage to calculate intercoder agreement rates which does not take account of *chance*.¹⁶⁷ If there is a small number of categories or the data is dichotomous, sufficient agreement could theoretically be produced by closing your eyes and arbitrarily ticking boxes. This creates problems as a high agreement rate could be achieved without reflecting the integrity of the analysis. Another reason is we can expect a higher percentage agreement rate when one category is more common than another; given that is the case in this project if it had used percentage agreement rates it would have been empirically dubious. On this point the literature is clear, using percentages to calculate agreement rates is enough of a sin to potentially invalidate any results gained.¹⁶⁸ One paper reviewing content analysis did say percentage agreement rates could be used for simple, nominal data – but even then “percent agreement should not be used alone” and was frequently abused in a number of papers.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Lombard *et al* (2002), p 601.

¹⁶⁷ Krippendorff (2013), pp 292 – 300.

¹⁶⁸ Potter and Donnerstein (1999), pp 273 – 276; Lombard *et al* (2002), pp 590 – 591; De Swert (2012), p 7; Krippendorff (2013), pp 292 – 293; see virtually anybody who writes about content analysis.

¹⁶⁹ Charles Feng Guangchao (2014), "Intercoder reliability indices: disuse, misuse, and abuse" *Quality & Quantity* 48 (3), p 1810.

There are numerous indices that can be used to determine intercoder reliability. Krippendorff's Alpha was chosen due to its accessibility and rigour. It is possible to download a macro¹⁷⁰ to make calculating it easy and there are clear online resources instructing scholars in its use;¹⁷¹ there is no excuse for using percentages to measure agreement. Moreover, it is a coefficient that is fairly well regarded in the literature generally due to its ability to factor chance, flexibility, and reactivity to the nature of particular disagreements between themes without treating them all as equal.¹⁷² It would be beyond the scope of this paper to enter into a detailed discussion of indices for measuring intercoder agreement, for the type of data used here it is appropriate and no paper encountered advises against using it in these circumstances.

After testing the data in SPSS this content analysis received a Krippendorff's Alpha reliability rating of 0.8158, with 1 indicating perfect reliability and 0 indicating the absence of reliability.¹⁷³ A Krippendorff Alpha reliability rating higher than 0.8 is considered firm and reliable;¹⁷⁴ showing that the level of intercoder agreement was high enough to base the claim that this content analysis is objective and *stable*. Attached in the appendix is the cross tabulations used to come to this figure, which were coded into a macro in SPSS, I have included these to make the project easier to replicate and to make the analysis open to criticism. Krippendorff's Alpha is complex given that it assesses agreement pairs as well as the relationships between coding categories. As such, I needed to rely on the macro mentioned above, a true gift to social science researchers not well versed in mathematics – articles instructing on the use Krippendorff's Alpha encourage its use and relying on it is not against best practice.¹⁷⁵

Ideally, *replicability* would be proven by having another set of researchers conduct the same test with a similar outcome. That is not a realistic outcome at this point given time. In order to make this content analysis replicable it is relying on transparency, and as mentioned above,

¹⁷⁰ See Andrew Hayes, "My Macros and Code for SPSS and SAS," available at <http://afhayes.com/spss-sas-and-mplus-macros-and-code.html> accessed: 04/08/2018.

¹⁷¹ Kent Löfgren (2017), "Nominal dichotomous yes/no data: Krippendorff alpha inter-rater reliability," posted on YouTube March 3, 2017, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcC99TrynKQ&t=480s> accessed: 04/08/2018

¹⁷² See Lombard et al (2002), pp 592 – 593; Artstein, Ron, and Massimo Poesio (2008), "Inter-coder agreement for computational linguistics," *Computational Linguistics* 34 (4), pp 564 – 565. Guangchao Charles Feng contends that Krippendorff's Alpha has issues of producing abnormally low reliability ratings if the content analysis is very complicated, this project is not simple due to the number of themes and schema but did not suffer from this problem as what it was designed to measure did not meet the threshold of being problematic. See Feng (2014), pp 1803 – 1804.

¹⁷³ Krippendorff (2013), pp 277 – 279.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, pp 324 – 325.

¹⁷⁵ De Swert (2012), pp 1 – 6.

this methodology is being written to be easily followed so problems of replicability should be easy to spot. Furthermore, the high intercoder reliability rate supports the notion that this research is to a satisfactory extent replicable as the set themes could be coded consistently by independent coders.

There is ample evidence to suggest that this content analysis is reliable. Another step towards proving reliability is detailing what kind of coders were selected, why, and their training and instructions.

Coder Selection

Selected coders need to use their intuitions and the above guide should be applied systematically; but not rigidly. If the answer is not clear after reference to all the parts above coders should follow their stomachs. If the word “military” is used frequently in the article it is likely to be a Military/Strategic themed article – there is room for coder intuitions. It is desirable for a content analysis to capture the natural intuitions of readers to some extent. In this study two independent coders were used to test inter-coder agreement using myself as a baseline.

I do not expect the traits listed above to be exhaustive of all the elements that may be present for each article, part of this will rely on the intuitions of the coders. In this study, proposed coders should have some training in International Relations and ideally a semblance of China literacy.¹⁷⁶ Post-graduate students or students coming to the end of their degree with some familiarity of Xinhua and China more generally are the kind of people that would make good coders. This is because most of the audience who engage with Xinhua have spent time living there and are to some degree China literate.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, people of this general background are a good pick for potential coders. This study does not measure the impact of these articles on its readership, but it is concerned with how China portrays itself so having coders that vaguely resemble part of the real-world audience¹⁷⁸ is in my opinion helpful. In this project two post-graduate students studying towards their Masters degrees in International Relations with an interest in China were selected to act as independent coders.

¹⁷⁶ Krippendorff (2013), pp 128 – 129. Coders must also possess the ability to consistently apply the appropriate framework, which is a skill that not everyone has. A degree of academic training is desirable.

¹⁷⁷ See Joseph James Alvaro (2015), “Analysing China's English-language media,” *World Englishes* 34(2), p 271.

¹⁷⁸ In this case people with formal education on China.

Attached in the appendix is a coding guide which contains the *exact information* given for each coder to follow; as well as the PowerPoint that was used for an initial training seminar. Many content analyses suffer from not detailing coder training and selection. In this experiment coders will undergo roughly two hours' worth of training to discuss and clarify the themes, advise how to fill out the resources and to go through some example articles. Ideally, the training session and a short refresher consisting of some example articles (we used four articles to get coders thinking in terms of the guide) directly prior to coding should be the only contact with each coder about the project. Coders in this experiment will be paid due to the fairly large number of hours it will take to participate (about twelve all up). How we coded the articles and what I did to cross tabulate their information should be clear from the original coding sheets attached in the appendix. Including these sheets was a good example of best practice to demonstrate that the data is clean and open to scrutiny.

Validity

Validity concerns whether the “inferences drawn from the available texts withstand the test of independently available evidence, of new observations, of competing theories or interpretations, or of being able to inform successful actions.”¹⁷⁹ In a word validity concerns *truth*. A content analysis is valid if it has a clear and easy to follow coding scheme and connects with established theories and a mind to wider social factors (context).¹⁸⁰ To be valid it needs to look at a relevant body of articles and measure what it says it will.

Crucially a content analysis needs to be *context sensitive*.¹⁸¹ As covered in the section on unitization, it was not possible to know if Factiva has an exhaustive selection of Chinese dream articles or what population of the overall number of China dream articles were tested. Better practice would have been to find an exhaustive set of articles to compare Factiva's selection to. As a result, sampling validity cannot be decisively proven given the absence of any exhaustive set of articles exacerbated by Xinhua's monolithic structure.

Achieving perfect validity was not possible, but as mentioned above we do know that these articles are taken from Dow Jones by a range of Western News outlets making it an important framing tool. It is because of this fact that the 1906 China dream articles sourced from Factiva

¹⁷⁹ Krippendorff (2013), p 329.

¹⁸⁰ Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999), pp 266-267.

¹⁸¹ Krippendorff (2013), pp 336 – 337.

were appropriate for measuring how Xinhua presents the Chinese dream to Western audiences. Xinhua is directly under the control of the Central Committee of the CCP and enjoys status as an official mouth piece with a headquarters strategically located close to Zhongnanhai – demonstrating the appropriateness of studying it when considering how the Chinese government aims to frame the Chinese dream.

The true test of validity lies in whether the results are actually useful, connect with the literature, or offer any real insights into China's aims and ambitions: as opposed to being an abstract analysis, mathematically sound but absent any true utility. Providing valuable insights into the real world is the true test of validity.

Content Analysis on Chinese Media

After reviewing the literature using content analysis to study China's media there are critiques of the methodological approaches taken that need to be made. The methodology used in much of the existing literature does not follow the best practices laid out in the ample supply of texts instructing scholars in the use of content analysis; especially where calculating intercoder agreement is concerned. This issue is noted by Guangchao Feng, who shows that intercoder reliability tests are often poorly conducted in the field of communication studies generally,¹⁸² and unfortunately content analyses studying discourse on China are not exempt from this claim.

It is important to note that later studies benefit immensely from recent developments in the literature on content analysis – so a charitable view to these faults is warranted, even more so if the paper was published over ten years ago.

Yi Edward Yang and Xinsheng Liu's *The China 'Threat' through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992-2006* relied on percentages alone to test for intercoder agreement across 703 articles from five American newspapers;¹⁸³ meaning their results could have been produced by chance. No details on coder training or a definition of what determined an irrelevant article were provided, the latter being problematic as the research relied on a keyword search. Even the identity of the independent coders was suspect as it seems that the authors used themselves to test reliability and coded an article under one category after mutual agreement¹⁸⁴ – using the authors creates problems regarding any concept of independent verification and objectivity.

¹⁸² Feng (2014), p 1811 – 1813.

¹⁸³ Yang and Liu (2012), pp 701 – 703.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

A lot of Yang and Liu's paper is valuable; the presentation of the data and subsequent discussion of the results were well executed and provided a template for how this content analysis was carried out.¹⁸⁵ There is not space to discuss everything that was done well – full credit to the authors for how clearly and effectively they communicated their results and inserted them into existing literature. Their work mainly fell down on reliability.

Zhengjun Peng's *Representation of China: An across time analysis of coverage in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times* was more concerning. This study was a complex content analysis also measuring the thematic distributions of the China Threat Theory in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*. Firstly, it involved coding articles into thematic frames and then conducted a five-point Likert scale measuring for a negative tone; with two independent coders coding 10% of a total 189 articles.¹⁸⁶ The intercoder reliability test was only carried out on 19 articles. That is far too small a number to consider reliable – if more articles were assessed a greater number of disagreements may have emerged. Additionally, the Holsti coefficient relied on in the study is very similar to percentages¹⁸⁷ and also does not account for chance.¹⁸⁸ It is likely, given the complexity of this content analysis, that the number of disagreements would have increased if a greater population were tested. Such a small sample size for conducting an intercoder reliability test cannot be seen as best practice.

These missuses of intercoder reliability tests need to be avoided in future research. Other papers showed problems also – there is not space to address them all here in the detail required. Future research should address this problem so other studies in the field do not suffer the same deficiencies.

¹⁸⁵ See Ibid, pp 703 – 709.

¹⁸⁶ Zengjun (2007).

¹⁸⁷ Feng (2014), p 1806.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p 1808.

5. Results and Findings

The central objective was to ascertain what thematic frames stood out in Xinhua's portrayal of the Chinese dream across a total of 1095 relevant articles sourced from 2013 – 2017 and ascertain whether it represented a shift towards a new globally orientated era of “Striving for Achievement.” As such, the research question was phrased as follows:

What themes are most commonly attached to Xi Jinping's “China Dream” in state media outlets such as Xinhua? Is the “Chinese Dream” presented to Western audiences as a concept of global engagement?

The thematic frame that was the most visible across Xinhua's reporting was the Political/Domestic category with 43.2% (see Table 2) of all relevant articles coded into it. Political/World scored 37.3% of the total – behind the Political/Domestic theme but not by a large margin. Interestingly, Political/World dominated coverage over 2014 – 2015 as the largest coded category; but fell sharply in the years that followed. Across all other years the Political/Domestic theme was the highest coded category.

Both of the smaller themes, Military/Strategic and Personal/Individual were present but were coded less than both political themes. As mentioned earlier, separating economic themes from political or ideological framing was inherently fraught given how conjoined they are, accounting for a large amount of this slanting. Like the signature tifa of all of China's leaders – especially the post-Mao cohort – economic concerns always take centre place.¹⁸⁹ The Military/Strategic frame accounted for 9.5% of all relevant articles and the Personal/Individual frame accounted for a slightly higher number at 10% of all relevant articles. The portrayal of the Chinese dream on terms of individual striving, akin to the traditional view of the American dream, was marginally more present across Xinhua's reporting than any flaunting of hard power assets.

World Dream Versus a Dream for China

Although the Political/World theme was the most coded theme in the years 2014 (101 articles, 46.3% of the total) and 2015 (91 articles, 44% of the total), the number of articles coded into this theme decreased significantly across 2016 – 2017; roughly halving in number and

¹⁸⁹ Sørensen (2015), p 55.

Table 2. *Annual distribution of Xinhua Chinese Dream articles by thematic dimension*

Year	Military/Strategic	Political/World	Political/Domestic	Individual/Personal	Total	Irrelevant
2013	13 (4.4%)	114 (38.6%)	130 (44.1%)	38 (12.9%)	295 (100%)	136
2014	25 (11.5%)	101 (46.3%)	74 (33.9%)	18 (8.3%)	218 (100%)	122
2015	21 (10.1%)	91 (44%)	81 (39.1%)	14 (6.8%)	207 (100%)	195
2016	23 (13.1%)	43 (24.4%)	95 (54%)	15 (8.5%)	176 (100%)	183
2017	22 (11.1%)	59 (29.8%)	93 (47%)	24 (12.1%)	198 (100%)	176
Total	104 (9.5%)	408 (37.3%)	473 (43.2%)	109 (10%)	1095 (100%)	812

Sources: *Factiva, Xinhua News Agency.*

Key word Search: “*Dream and (China or Chinese)*”

* Percentages are rounded up to one decimal place

comprising of only 24.4% of all articles coded in 2016 (with a slight increase in 2017).

Against the Striving for Achievement literature which claimed that the Chinese dream was a tifa increasingly concerned with global engagement, as opposed to being internally focussed on China’s development (in line with Peaceful Development), Xinhua’s coverage actually became less internationally orientated as time went on reverting to a greater domestic focus – which sits uncomfortably with the idea that the Chinese dream is a concept demonstrating a substantive shift toward greater global engagement. Why this was the case is unclear, especially given the large number of overseas projects that have been embarked on under Xi Jinping’s tenure.

It is notable that the Political/World category did feature prominently across 2014-2015, demonstrating that the Chinese dream was predominantly presented as being globally orientated over these years – which shows that there was a strong global focus shortly after articulation during this period.

It is vital to point out that here is where the *limits* of this project are reached. It is impossible to say off the data gathered whether the Chinese dream as a principle represents a substantive shift away from Keeping a Low Profile. Against the backdrop of the Belt and Road Initiative,

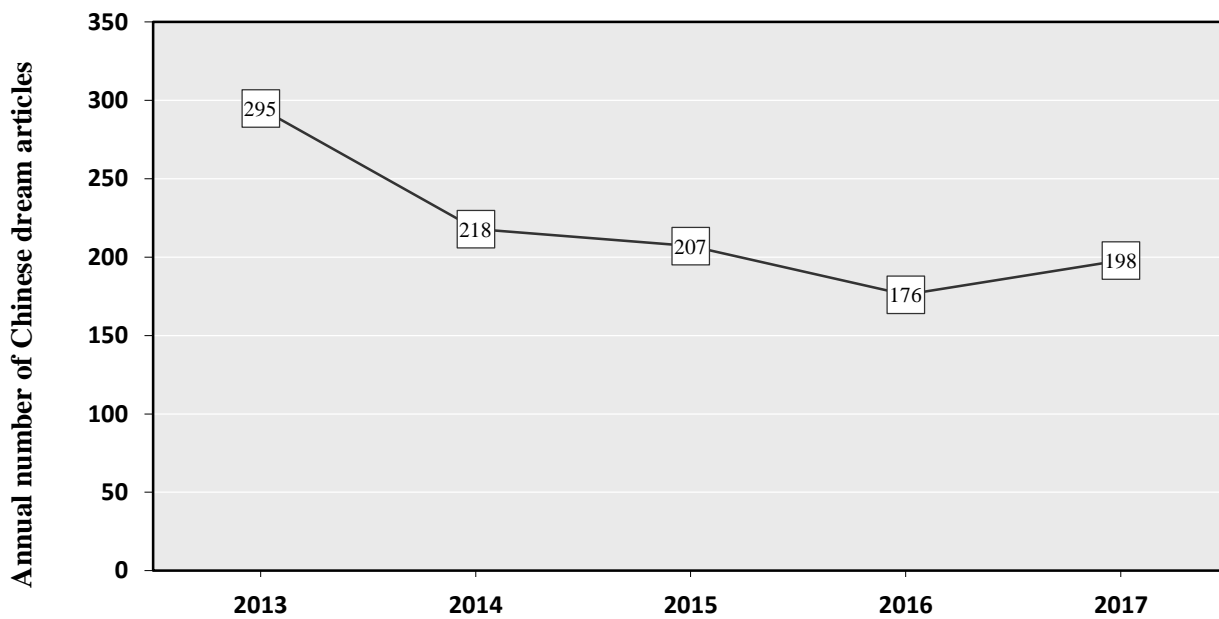


Figure 1: Annual frequency of relevant Xinhua Chinese dream articles: 2013 – 2017

Sources: Factiva, Xinhua News Agency

such a presumption that it does would be reasonable given the Chinese dreams connection to Xi. As noted by scholars such as Camilla T.N. Sørensen and Yan Xuetong in their analyses of a number of official speeches by Xi Jinping, official statements support the concept that the Chinese dream heralds a shift towards a global focus.¹⁹⁰

Interestingly, these scholarly works promoting this view were published in the years that the Chinese dream was predominantly presented by Xinhua as being globally orientated over 2014 - 2015; what this research finds is at least so far as Xinhua's coverage of the dream is concerned this focus *was lost in subsequent years*. It is possible that there was a honeymoon period at this time where Xinhua was boldly covering China's overseas endeavours that then waned.

What this is consistent with is a decline in the number of relevant articles as the years went on (see figure 1) – there were a larger number of articles mentioning the Chinese dream either directly or through a similar formulation (eg. “China's world dream”) shortly after Xi's adoption of it in November 2012.

It makes sense that there was a spike in coverage right after Xi articulated his connection to the Chinese dream. The number of hits for the keyword search “dream AND (China OR Chinese)”

¹⁹⁰ See Yan Xuetong (2014); Sørensen (2015).

in Factiva was only 207 in 2012 jumping to 490 in 2013 – hovering around the 400 mark in subsequent years.¹⁹¹ Prior to 2013 there were usually fewer than 200 hits following a downward slope tailing off around the early 2000s. While it is unknown is how many *relevant* Chinese dream articles are actually present in Factiva’s pre-2013 corpus as they were outside of this analysis; a good inference is that the number increased markedly from 2013 onwards, which is highly likely given the notably smaller number of results returned by the search term. By comparison, a typical news cycle in the United States is found to only last for two days.¹⁹² It depends on the news and there is a large degree of variance – however in no democratic polity do political slogans typically have a shelf life of decades as new parties enter the scene or new slogans are articulated around campaign time.

Public attention is itself a finite resource, many other messages both commercial or political are vying for the individual mind at any given point, and media coverage of an issue tends to lose its impact overtime.¹⁹³ The cyclical nature of news could explain why the number of Chinese dream articles saw a decrease overtime.

That being said, both articles covering the “China Threat Theory” saw a fluctuation (albeit a rising one) in coverage over the late nineties to the early 2000s in papers from the United States with a sharp decline following 2001¹⁹⁴ – largely in part due to refocussing caused by the War on Terror following the Twin Tower bombings. News coverage is highly context sensitive and events can cause the return of an issue to prominence – as seen by coverage of terrorism after the Paris shootings, high-school massacres in The United States or the #MeToo movement in Hollywood. The China Threat theory was consistently buoyed by the impressive economic growth figures continuously emerging in the late 1990s, that was largely supplanted by the War on Terror in 2001.

The Chinese dream has become older since its adoption leading to some degree of reporting fatigue on the part of Xinhua; reiterating a slogan could become more difficult as time goes on. Top down slogans pushed by Party elites and Xi Jinping himself means that the kind of events that bring tifa into the reporting limelight often stem from the government itself. Even if there

¹⁹¹ Factiva, “Export Distribution by Date,” available at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#!/?&_suid=154017637469209369243422132663 accessed:21/09/2018.

¹⁹² Chenhao Tan, Adrien Friggeri, and Lada A. Adamic (2016), “Lost in Propagation? Unfolding News Cycles from the Source,” In *Proceedings of the Tenth International AAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, p 381.

¹⁹³ Krippendorff (2013), pp 256 – 258.

¹⁹⁴ See Zengjun (2007), p 62; Yang and Liu (2012), pp 702-703.

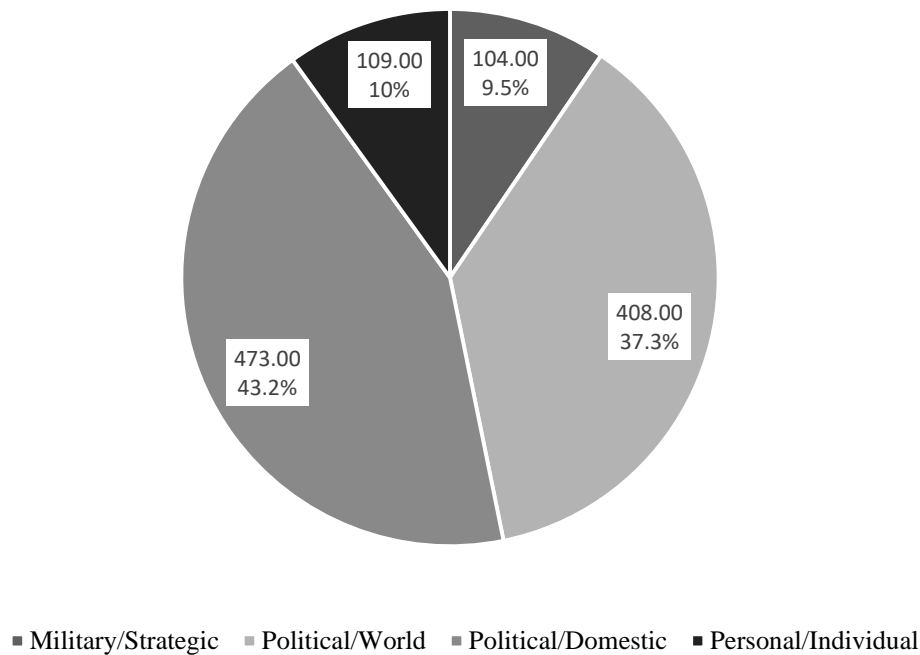


Figure 2: Overall distribution of Xinhua Chinese dream articles by theme: 2013 – 2017
Source: Factiva, Xinhua News Agency

are directives to mention the Chinese dream, it still needs to be attached to news worthy events to reach an article.

A conclusive way to answer this question would be to see whether Xinhua’s reporting on the Chinese dream has encountered another resurgence following Xi Jinping’s consolidation of power following the 19th National Congress and his removal of term limits in 2017 – given the Chinese dream’s attachment to Xi personally this could increase its salience. It would make sense that top down slogans like tifa are highly sensitive to government events. Extending this analysis beyond 2018 could provide an answer to this question to see if this trend continues.

The overall drop in coverage offers some suggestions but does not sufficiently explain why the Political/World frame dropped from salience.

It is possible that there were less newsworthy events (eg. bilateral treaties, international forums) to relate the Chinese dream to in an international sense. Another explanation is that the Chinese dream was more globally focussed shortly after the tifa was first phrased – during an aspirational honeymoon period. Even though there is a decrease overtime, the Chinese dream being phrased as tifa of global engagement did not drop dramatically from coverage and showed a slight rebound in 2017. There would need to be later research of a longer time period to substantiate that the Chinese dream being framed as a doctrine of global engagement has

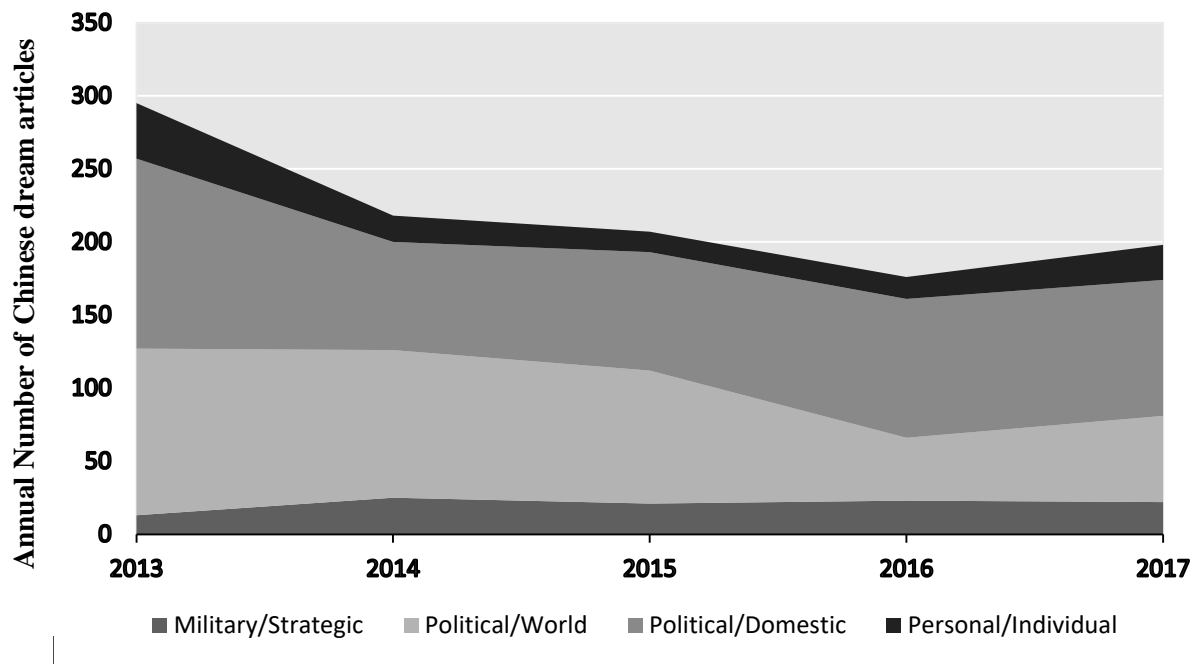


Figure 3: Annual distribution of Xinhua Chinese dream articles by theme: 2013 – 2017
Sources: Factiva, Xinhua News Agency

sufficiently waned or returned to prominence. At this point, the data does not support that the Chinese dream is *substantively* phrased as tifa of global engagement in a sustained way through Xinhua’s reporting – although it leaves an open question of whether this will remain the case.

It does, however, reflect that there is a strong element of global focus accounting for 37.3% of all of Xinhua’s coverage on the Chinese dream; while there was always going to be some global component, I would say its presence has been revealed as being significant. In order to sufficiently answer the question of whether the Chinese dream is portrayed as a shift towards a new doctrine of Striving for Achievement two steps could be taken on the research presented so far:

1. An extension of the corpus of articles to include some of the years from Xi Jinping’s second term (2018 – 2023).
2. The application of the current thematic frames to Peaceful Development to measure the extent to which it was presented as a globally orientated tifa in order to provide a reference point.

As is often the case with the truth, findings are not always neat and able to be finely packaged one way or another. The data as it stands here reveals that there was an initial outward focus in

Xinhua's reporting that then waned – in order to sufficiently answer the question as posed further research would need to be undertaken to find answers beyond those supplied here.

The Individual Chinese Dream

Another interesting finding was the presence of an individual component to the China dream. Much of the literature on the Chinese dream claims that it is purely collective – “that the China dream is the dream of a nation; the American dream is the dream of an individual.”¹⁹⁵

Peter Ferdinand mentions the work of Li Junru, one of the first to talk of the Chinese dream, who discussed the Chinese dream as being a collective dream of national development and success epitomized by the successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games – a dream for a successful China as opposed to any individual Chinese.¹⁹⁶

Li Junru himself paints a clear distinction between the American dream and the Chinese dream: “Our dream also differs from the ‘American dream,’ which also relies on large-scale consumption of scarce resources of various kinds, especially energy to develop that country. The “China dream” is one of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and taking a unique road to develop China peacefully.”¹⁹⁷

It is hard to know if Li ever went outside when he was writing given China's mass consumption of fossil fuels and visibly dire air quality in the pursuit of development. Regardless, Li makes it clear elsewhere there are two types of China dreams – one for the people collectively and one for the world.¹⁹⁸ It is likely his disdain for the American dream stems from the common criticism that it is a doctrine of crass, mindless, empty consumerism that he wants the Chinese dream to be better than by rejecting the individualistic component. Callahan states that high-profile commentators on the Chinese dream from within China attempt to distinguish the Chinese dream as a virtuous national drive for rejuvenation; as opposed to “a collection of individuals bent on their own selfish schemes.”¹⁹⁹ Instead, the official line is that individual Chinese realise their own dreams *through* the realization of the national dream.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ The Diplomat (2013), “Xi Jinping's Chinese dream may be new in name, but it continues a long tradition for the Chinese Communist Party,” The Diplomat Online September 20, 2013, at <https://thediplomat.com/2013/09/the-chinese-dream-from-mao-to-xi/> accessed 29/09/2018.

¹⁹⁶ Ferdinand (2016), p 943.

¹⁹⁷ Li (2006), p 8.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, Foreword.

¹⁹⁹ Callahan (2015), p 223.

²⁰⁰ Zheng (2013), p 8; Sørensen (2015), p 56; Callahan (2016), p 235.

An exceptionally loaded survey found that 24% of 2878 urban residents did find the essence of the Chinese dream to be an individual dream with the pursuit of individual development; but concluded that the Chinese dream has a strong character of collectivism.²⁰¹ The same paper was also careful to clarify in the conclusion that the respondents who answered in such a way supported the greater Chinese dream through their belief in individual dreams.²⁰² There is a clear hesitancy in many of the Chinese dream's domestic proponents to have the Chinese dream equated with the American dream on an individual level. Individual dreams are allowed, even encouraged, so long as they contribute to the wider national dream.

This seems like a meaningless distinction as proponents of the American dream would for the most part claim the same – work hard and *earn* it. Working hard is supposed to contribute to society and develop a strong and flourishing nation; even if that is not strictly always the case. Individual success leads to national success.

Although it is not the primary focus, this thesis rejects that the Chinese dream is not in part presented as an ideal of individual striving similar to the American dream. Over the period of time studied, 109 of Xinhua's articles (10% of the total coverage) presented the Chinese dream as being an ideal of individual aspiration. It was a hard frame to measure, as it often needed reference to the "Chinese dream" which literally means the dream of a collective, but there were echoes of presenting China as the land of opportunity for individual ambition in ways akin to the American dream in Xinhua's reporting. The Chinese dream was presented more as a term for individual striving than it was in any kind of militaristic sense. That 24% of urban Chinese perceived the Chinese dream in an individual sense shows that this perception is present domestically as well.

Why this is the case is probably due to the renown of its initial inspiration; the American dream. It is difficult to divorce the Chinese dream from the individual level which leaks through in reporting – personal interest stories are far too interesting and easy to write about. I would speculate that it is impossible to articulate a concept so linguistically similar to the American variant without adopting some of the individual striving.

The Individual/Personal frame was not the focus of Xinhua's reporting and has showed a decrease in coverage after formulation – it was likely some traces of individualism were always

²⁰¹ See Chunlong Lu (2015), "Urban Chinese support for the Chinese dream: Empirical findings from seventeen cities," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 20(2), pp 148 – 152. The survey questions clearly lead towards positive answers; also given the highly political nature of the questions and lack of any steps to ensure anonymity the respondents could be compromised as they all live in China.

²⁰² Ibid, p 157.

going to be found. What was surprising however, was that it emerged as the dominant theme across 10% of all coverage in the corpus – many articles even showed little differentiation from traditional presentations of the American dream (see Table 3 below). Furthermore, the number of articles coded into this category showed a slight increase over 2016 and 2017 (see Figure 3).

The Chinese dream may be overwhelmingly framed as being a national dream of rejuvenation, however, the temptation to report about typical rags-to-riches stories is too easy to do in the context of a national dream of revitalization. While being far from a central component of the Chinese dream, the data here reveals the similarities between the dreams of China and the United States, which are highly materialistic, competitive places. The difference is again in *degree*. The Chinese dream is more concerned with rejuvenation and global engagement but still contains a notable individualistic component contrary to many assertions in the literature.

These findings show that there is a classically individualistic aspect to how the dream is portrayed by Xinhua whether it is intended by top government figures and scholars or not.

Speaking Softly

Another interesting framing of the Chinese dream was the Militaristic/Strategic theme. This was the smallest thematic category coded in the analysis.

Firstly, one theory as to why Hu Jintao dropped his “peaceful rise” tifa and opted for “peaceful development” is that the former seemed weak and ruled out reunification of Taiwan by force.²⁰³ Undoubtedly, Xi Jinping wanted some aspect of military assertiveness to be visible in his signature tifa. A key concern of Xi’s regarding the Hu Jintao-Wen Jiaobo era was the perception of weak leadership²⁰⁴ that he has actively cultivated a strong man image against. Of Xinhua’s coverage of the Chinese dream 104 of the articles were coded into this theme showing that military imagery is attached, although it is on the periphery of the tifa accounting for 9.5% of the coverage – significant but far from defining. What was interesting was that the Individual/Personal frame attracted greater coverage.

The “dominant interpretation” in Western media of the Chinese dream is a dream of nationalism that will regain great power status with the use of military force if necessary.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Suettinger (2004), pp 6 – 7.

²⁰⁴ Callahan (2016), p 229.

²⁰⁵ Sørensen (2015), p 57.

Xinhua's presentation of the Chinese dream is overwhelmingly more geared towards economic development than military imagery; this disconnect in presentation from Chinese state media of China's benign global role and Western media who perceive China to be a threat is predictable. In Theodore Roosevelt's tradition of "speaking softly and carrying a big stick" the Chinese dream seeks to reassure and at the same time assert – however like peaceful development it places a greater emphasis on reassurance. At the very least China is not refraining from portraying its dream of rejuvenation from also exhibiting a militaristic character. Global engagement, particularly in promoting economic globalism and win-win outcomes is a greater part of the agenda when compared to this frame.

There is a military aspect to how the Chinese dream is presented by Xinhua. However, this is largely offset by the greater focus on global cooperation and international economic development. The Chinese dream shies away from being overtly militaristic at least in how the concept is portrayed.

Thematic Collocations

Attached below is a list of the themes that appeared physically closest to the Chinese dream within each article (See Table 3). A problem with this information is that it could not be verified by conducting an intercoder reliability test as it is far too complicated due to the vast array of themes that collocate closely with the Chinese dream.

One of the limitations of the approach advocated by Klaus Krippendorff and others is that reliability becomes harder to achieve when the study is more complicated.²⁰⁶ The closest collocating theme was sometimes difficult to ascertain as many articles would list a number of themes before and after it mentioned the Chinese dream. Often, this was resolved by simply collocating the first mentioned or nearest evident theme if it appeared in another sentence. A number of Chinese dream articles did not even have a theme that could be considered collocating, as such they were left off of this table, and there are not 1907 consistent data points mapped here. This table was mostly derived from a careful reading of the articles using natural intuitions to determine the closest theme – because this study concerns language and messaging such an approach does not make the data here completely worthless. It has problems with replicability and reliability so needs to be taken with caution.

²⁰⁶ Feng (2014), p 1804.

Table 3. *Annual distribution of Xinhua Chinese Dream articles
by thematic dimension*

Closest Collocating Theme	Number of articles where the theme appeared closest to the Chinese dream
Aim of building a moderately prosperous society or well-off society is crucial to realising the “Chinese dream”	18
Deepening economic reform and development is key to realizing the Chinese dream	41
Preserving the environment is important in realizing the dream	11
Entrepreneurs build a Chinese dream by starting a business or attempting a feat	8
Confidence in socialism with Chinese Characteristics to realise the China dream	16
Continuing the path of Reforming and Opening up is key to the dream	2
The goal of “realizing the ‘China Dream’ of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation	321
A virtuous individual or individuals held up as an example of the Chinese dream	10
Cultural prosperity and positive messaging is vital to realizing the Chinese dream	19
The Chinese dream presents China as a land of opportunity and individual prosperity	17
Realising internal development is part of the dream of China	3
Building bilateral relationships on peaceful development is a part of the China dream	8
Chinese dream is the right direction	7
The anti-corruption campaign as central to the China dream	9
Reunification with Taiwan as part of the China dream	5
The realization of the China dream brings opportunities for the world	4
Shared prosperity is the China Dream	13
The China Dream involves Peaceful Development	5

The China dream inspires individual dreams	22
The Chinese dream is watched by other nations	15
Unity and cooperation is vital in realizing the China dream	18
The China Dream as connected to a wider “world dream”	36
Foreigners aspiring or realizing to the Chinese dream	20
Everyone “domestically” must contribute and are a part of the Chinese dream	42
The Space Dream as part of realising the Chinese Dream	28
Chinese dream is shared with Taiwan	5
A strong military is needed to realise the Chinese Dream	30
Upholding credibility and loyalty of the press realizes the Chinese Dream	3
The China dream is also part of a pan-Asian dream	30
Other countries benefit from the realization of the China dream	12
Realizing the Chinese dream requires a virtuous bureaucracy	3
The Chinese dream is a dream of global peace and cooperation	9
Rule of law is vital to realizing the Chinese dream	2
The Chinese dream involves human rights development	7
China dream is about prosperity	15
Elder care is vital to the Chinese dream	2
Furthering bi-lateral relations is a cornerstone of the China Dream	6

Promoting education is central to the Chinese Dream	4
Leadership of CPC is central to realizing the China Dream	4
The Chinese dream connects with the dreams of other nations	53
One Belt, One Road (or other formulations) a crucial element of the Chinese dream	14
Realizing the Chinese dream involves realizing individual dreams	4
All Chinese around the world are connected to the Chinese dream	2
The Chinese dream is concerned with international security and a stable world	3
China must become innovative or creative to realise the Chinese dream	5
China has a unique development path	2
The Chinese dream is about internal security	3
aviation dream of promoting aircraft in China	5
Access to education is part of the Chinese dream	6
Developing high-technology will realise the China dream	4
“One country, two systems” is integral to the Chinese dream	2
Chinese people or foreigners are confident in realizing the Chinese dream	7
The Chinese dream is that of the ordinary people	2
Hard work will realize the dream	3
Patriotism is key to the dream	2
Four comprehensives are vital to realising the dream	2

Chinese dream realized by Major country diplomacy	2
Dream realized through the new long march	2
A civil code dream	2

Sources: Factiva, Xinhua News Agency

In the content analysis proper the article was seen as the unit of measurement while in Table 3 it is a sentence or paragraph – that means that the thematic compositions could change depending on whether the closest mentioned theme carries significance or if the article colours the term. The overall tone of the article is more important, as simply counting the number of times the Chinese dream collocates with national rejuvenation says very little; viewing the term by closest collocation is a very narrow lens. It does however, show an interesting side to the data. If a theme was mentioned as being required to “realize” the Chinese dream it was coded as being the closest collocating the theme. This approach required a large amount of paraphrasing.

While this data is highly limited it does offer an interesting take on the Chinese dream – mostly it shows how broadly the dream can be applied.

National Rejuvenation is by far the most closely collocating theme, however, this is not all there is. As can be from the sheer number of themes that collocate directly with the term it can be projected on anything. The number of themes that were only mentioned once were omitted, otherwise the table itself would become too unwieldy to analyse. When taken by itself, the “Chinese dream of national rejuvenation” is overwhelmingly the closest collocating theme, appearing in 321 articles. Although the other categories are much smaller, cumulatively they show that the Chinese dream extends much further. A total of 634 Xinhua articles collocated the Chinese dream with a range of themes from connecting with the dreams of other nations, promoting economic reform, or even niche themes like the “aviation dream” of promoting air craft usage in China. The sheer variance of closely collocating themes show that Ferdinand is correct when he says that the Chinese dream is a concept with a large amount of “plasticity.”²⁰⁷

Revealing some true “hidden meaning” is not possible for tifa such as the Chinese dream²⁰⁸ which is connected to such a vast range of concepts. A consistency across these themes is that

²⁰⁷ Ferdinand (2016), p 944.

²⁰⁸ Sørensen (2015), p 58.

they are for the most part very positive – supporting the contention that it is a tifa with “positive energy.”²⁰⁹ This is not very surprising given the aspirational nature of dreams.

Beyond rejuvenation there are some other frequently recurring collocations worth discussing. The second most collocating theme was that the Chinese dreams “connects” with the dreams of other nations, which appeared in 53 articles. As discussed in the chapter on the Chinese dream above – the concept is portrayed by both officials and Xinhua as being pluralistic. The Chinese dream is not sold as something other nations must adopt. It is portrayed more often as a concept of “win-win” economic outcomes that leaves room for countries to pursue other dreams.

36 articles connected the Chinese dream to a greater world dream and 30 advanced the Chinese dream as a “pan-Asian dream.” Encouraging other nations to adopt the “China model” as such is not part of how the dream is phrased – although Xinhua and China’s officials do not go so far as to say it is only for China and there are signs that it is part of a greater global concept or a regionally promoted idea. There is room to suggest that it could one day be the dream of other nations.

Another theme that was notably recurring was the imperative that everyone domestically must contribute and are a part of the “Chinese dream.” There is no opt out – Chinese people are a part of the dream whether they like it or not.

On March 3, 2018, Yu Zhengsheng called to “mobilize all the sons and daughters (of ethnic Chinese) to work together for the greater national interests and the realization of the Chinese dream.”²¹⁰ This can be seen as a rationalization of Xi’s strategy to “harness the overseas Chinese population for the CCP’s current economic and political agenda;” which has been taken to a “new level of ambition.”²¹¹ This concept of harnessing the Chinese diaspora is not novel to Xi and Chinese citizens overseas were recognized as a “patriotic force” in the late 1970s.²¹² Influencing other nations through the diaspora has long been on the agenda – and the CCP’s United Front of co-opting or potentially coercing overseas Chinese to suit its interests has generated a lot of headlines in countries like New Zealand and Australia. What is relevant here is that the Chinese dream is portrayed as a concept for *all* ethnic Chinese wherever they

²⁰⁹ Ma and Thomas (2018).

²¹⁰ ABS News (2018), “Beijing works to rally ‘sons and daughters’ abroad to help create Chinese dream,” ABC News Online March 4, 2018, available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-04/beijing-official-urges-outreach-to-non-mainland-chinese/9506388> accessed: 20/10/2018.

²¹¹ Brady (2017), p 8.

²¹² Mette Thunø (2001), “Reaching out and incorporating Chinese overseas: The trans-territorial scope of the PRC by the end of the 20th century,” *The China Quarterly* 168, p 911.

may be. A small number of articles also stated that the dream is shared with Taiwan – in line with the leadership's conception of "One China."

China's leadership considers all Chinese people everywhere to be involved in realizing the dream.

Lastly, boosting economic development was also a frequently recurring collocation and was often a part of any articulated "world dream," even though it was not the closest collocating concept. Realizing high-technology through a "space dream," "aviation dream" or other similar formulations were also consistently collocated. Like other tifa such as peaceful development or the Three Represents – economic development remains a centre piece of the Xi's Chinese dream.

In this vain Xi's signature tifa follows on from other CCP leaders who were preoccupied with boosting economic national strength. While virtually anything can and is projected onto the Chinese dream, there are predominant collocations that show it as being a term of global engagement, a concept for all ethnic Chinese around the world, and possessing a preoccupation with development both domestically and internationally.

6. Discussion

The findings of this content analysis do not support the contentions by other scholars that the Chinese dream represents a shift in policy from Deng Xiaoping's strategy of Keeping a Low Profile towards Striving for Achievement from 2016 – and stand as a call for further research to substantiate that claim. Furthermore, they imply that the Chinese dream reverted to an inward focus over later years.

I would like to return to the question asked before: how do China's leaders present their aspirations for China to the world through Xi's signature tifa?

A Prototype Vision of Exceptionalism

The answer to this question is in a way remarkably simple – China's elites want China to be seen as a responsible, developed, civilized power that is engaged in the world in positive ways – even if the dream remains mostly centred on China in coverage as opposed to its involvement abroad. In 2009 China was “sensitive over the existence and impact of what it calls the China Threat Theory;”²¹³ it remains that way and Xi Jinping with other elites have advanced the Chinese dream as an assertive but reassuring vision in contrast to “peaceful development” that looked more to reassure.

As a concept the Chinese dream is still very much in development. Part of the reason it so opaque and plastic is that it is not a clear vision, which prompts a return to Callahan's assessment – across a diverse number of views discussing the Chinese dream in reference to a range of different topics, “everyone seems to see the super state of the World of Great Harmony as their ultimate goal.”²¹⁴ How to get there very much remains a work in progress as leaders, academics, CPD propaganda chiefs, and other Chinese elites continue to develop the concept into more concrete terms. I agree with Callahan that the dream is a vision of Chinese exceptionalism where the end game is the creation of a superpower – but beyond “positive energy” and global cooperation it remains very much a *prototype vision* of Chinese exceptionalism without a concrete definition beyond a rejuvenated China.

The concept of China being an exceptional country permeated Imperial China; with the emperor being the “Son of Heaven” and the country itself, Zhongguo, the “middle” or “central”

²¹³ David Scott (2010), “China and the “responsibilities” of a “responsible” power—the uncertainties of appropriate power rise language,” *Asia-Pacific Review* 17(1), p 74.

²¹⁴ Callahan (2013), p 162.

kingdom. Belief in Chinese supremacy was only shaken after the opium wars in the 1840s.²¹⁵ Interestingly, many Chinese scholars argue that the “basic international purpose of the Ming and Chinese empire in general was to ‘to share the fortune of peace’ with other polities by conducting a peaceful foreign policy.”²¹⁶ This is a myth, to be sure, as across many different dynasties wars with foreign powers still occurred.

The Chinese dream is certainly not a Pacifistic concept – on this point Xi is unequivocal that it requires a strong military. What is interesting are the similarities of “sharing the fortune of peace” with creating a “community of shared destiny” through the Chinese dream. The Chinese dream revives this older vision to some extent by presenting China as a benign and I would speculate as a comparatively more engaged power than under the doctrine of Keeping a Low Profile.

One problem is that the China model “lacks moral appeal because it is guided entirely by pragmatism, so that its behaviour is disciplined by neither a set of values nor established principles.”²¹⁷ Its purported goals are pragmatic – the “community of shared destiny” is mostly shared economic prosperity caveated with “core interests” that other nations are warned to stay away from. American exceptionalism does not have this problem to the same extent, and adheres to the idea that “being morally and politically exceptional, the United States has a destiny and a duty to expand its institutions and beliefs – freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and capitalism.”²¹⁸ In particular, can a power gain hegemony over other countries in the modern age without the force of *moral suasion*? Again, I am not equipped to answer this question in detail here.

The American variant is not necessarily simple, but American exceptionalism, as expressed in these core liberal values, is fairly well understood around the world. Perhaps because the Chinese dream is a newer concept it has not had the time to reach a mature articulation. Alternatively, the defining characteristics of Chinese exceptionalism comes from this very pragmatism combined with “respect and tolerance of all political values without putting itself at the centre.”²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Schell and Delury (2013), pp 12 – 36.

²¹⁶ Feng Zhang (2013), “The rise of Chinese exceptionalism in international relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 19(2), p 308.

²¹⁷ Benjamin Ho, “Understanding Chinese Exceptionalism: China’s Rise, Its Goodness, and Greatness,” *Alternatives* 39(3), p 171.

²¹⁸ Feng (2013), p 318.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p 319.

Xi has left room for nations to “dream their own dreams” in his articulation of the Chinese dream – and success and tolerance are concepts with moral suasion – especially from the perspective of a developing nation. A willingness to engage and create “win-win” outcomes irrespective of domestic decisions are principles that could gain moral appeal. Allowing nations to choose their own path, as opposed to cajoling them with sanctions and global power games, has the potential to become clearly established principles in the international arena. Other nations have supported the Non-Aligned movement showing there is already taste for the basic concept.

Is this formulation of the Chinese dream revisionist? In short, it’s not clear given that the Chinese dream has been made possible by global trade and non-alignment is by definition devoid of proposing global ideology. Regardless, any alternative concept gaining prominence in the international realm could inescapably be cast as such given its lack of adherence to the hegemonic ideology. As the renowned Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci notes:

“It is true that conquest of power and achievement of a new productive world are inseparable, and the propaganda for one of them is also propaganda for the other, and that in reality it is solely in this coincidence that the unity of the dominant class – at once economic and political – resides.”²²⁰

Even if the dream presents a benign image of a rejuvenated China, it could inherently be a term that must call for a rearrangement of global power – or it will invariably be perceived as a threat anyway. The scale of other calls for economic engagement in itself poses an ideological challenge.

The Chinese dream is a prototype vision of Chinese exceptionalism that builds on the core concepts of pragmatism and tolerance for norms the established order finds reprehensible. It presents a challenge to the universalist, liberal order that emerged victorious under the cold war – through an ideology of working with anybody who does not want to adapt that order and prizes development instead. China’s leadership realize that their growing power has been premised on the success of economic globalization – their dream of national rejuvenation wants or even needs this to continue – which makes the outright designation of revisionism difficult.

²²⁰ Antonio Gramsci (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci: Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith*: International Publishers, p 116.

In a sense, China is looking for alignment through non-alignment. Not picking a side can be picking a side. By articulating a desire to start engaging with the world China is beginning to start defining the terms of its engagement.

The Chinese dream is being held back, ironically enough, by Chinese elites themselves. A downside of *zheming* or the rectification of names is that a positive onus to use certain formulations forces a range of actors like Xinhua to disseminate the concept widely – this could in part explain the large number of concepts the dream collocates with; preventing the emergence of a clear concept. One problem with this approach is that it makes the term unclear by the sheer weight of reportage it compels from the vastly expanded means of communication China now wields. This could explain why the Chinese dream is projected on such a broad number of themes which can confuse audiences and make it hard to attach any consistent ideas to the term.

American exceptionalism emerged after a period of isolationism in the 1930s. It was following a dramatic shift in policy away from isolationism during World War Two that American exceptionalism started to gain global traction – it is possible that China is in a similar stage of ideological development. While the United States was emboldened following victory in 1945, China has gained confidence through its successful growth and increased global power, although this power itself is also fairly new. An outwardly focussed foreign policy focus may be a prerequisite for the development of national dreams and their corresponding concepts of national exceptionalism, although it is not clear that the Chinese dream does in fact represent this shift. China shares a similarity with the United States that it looked inwardly first, then gained the comprehensive national strength and confidence to articulate a dream. If the global power competition has changed from direct confrontation towards forming blocs and winning allies,²²¹ bloc building would be a logical next step, countries that do not buy into the Western led order have shown sympathies for pluralism.

China has been a large proponent of the “South-South” narrative and has worked extensively to foster relationships with developing nations in particular. Nations that have not yet benefited to the same degree from the global order as it stands could be appealed by China’s pragmatism and lack of ideological strings. Should the current peace negotiations between North Korea and the United States make significant progress, it is perfectly conceivable that North Korea could

²²¹ Yan (2014), p 184.

be the first country to substantively follow the China model; although no other country has formally adopted the model to date and such a claim is guesswork.

The Chinese dream as a concept of global engagement is still in its infancy and is best defined as a proto-type concept of national exceptionalism – it is a living concept that could become fully-fledged should China’s strength continue to grow.

Propaganda and Action

Studying discursive data alone will not help us understand the politics of China in its notoriously opaque system. China’s leadership is shrouded and there is a wealth of information to be gained from “paying attention to formulations and how they have changed or have not changed;”²²² especially given the lack of alternatives; but swallowing messages wholesale is to be avoided. Part of being responsible with discourse analysis is viewing purported concepts and seeing whether they connect with action.

Much of what has occurred under Xi over the last decade fits with propaganda messaging through tifa like the Chinese dream. China is asserting the “One China policy” by increasingly isolating Taiwan. In 2015, the China Development Bank “notionally reserved a further US \$890 billion”²²³ for development of the Belt and Road corridor outside of the country. It is completely unsurprising that large parts of the Asian region and beyond are awash with Chinese development loans – and that Chinese investment is increasing globally. It fits with the Chinese dream narrative pushed by the CCP to date of an economically resurgent China seeking win-win outcomes. Furthermore, China has been an active participant in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). It has expanded “its development relationship with Asian, Latin American and African countries in a wide range of areas, including infrastructure, telecommunications, health care, training and education.”²²⁴ As well as its signature large scale infrastructure programmes – China has been expanding its role in developing the Global South. These events tend to support the authors that claim there has been a shift to a new era of Striving for Achievement – although such things did occur under previous leaders.

Studying China’s propaganda is crucial for outside observers as it allows us to anticipate what China is likely to do and also to understand the justifications for such actions. There is a

²²² Fewsmith (2005), p 5.

²²³ Ferdinand (2016), p 950.

²²⁴ Fahimul Quadir (2013), “Rising Donors and the New Narrative of ‘South–South’ Cooperation: what prospects for changing the landscape of development assistance programmes?,” *Third World Quarterly* 34(2), p 325.

connection between China's propaganda and corresponding actions that fit the narrative. As mentioned in the introduction, that is not to say that propaganda messaging *anticipates reality perfectly*. States are full of ideological contradictions – if there is one thing The United States and China have in common it is the existence of a gap between what they say and do.

The contradiction between China's marketization under Deng Xiaoping and professed loyalty to the socialist road is at the very least striking. Be this as it may, discursive power and ideology cannot be written off. Antonio Gramsci's ground-breaking theory of cultural hegemony states that the supremacy of a "social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and 'intellectual and moral leadership.'"²²⁵ Gramsci realized that power took more than just guns and money – that leaders must mould individuals and create seemingly "organic consent" – through means such as "the church, the educational system, the press, all the institutions which helped to create in people certain modes of behaviour and expectations consistent with the hegemonic social order."²²⁶ There are "two great floors" to the superstructure: all of the often private organisations with cultural influence known as "civil society," and "political society" known as the state.²²⁷ Following the ideas of Gramsci it is through the efforts of a wide array of both traditionally private and state led institutions that create hegemony.

Mao's employment of the initially Confucian rectification of names or *zhenming* and imposed usage of *tifa* across an array of actors fits eerily well with Gramsci's concept of hegemony – and China's rulers have asserted a large degree of control over civil society and expanded the means of communication to control the cultural narrative.

Leadership *must* be rationalized as well as being enforced. Even if elites impose their ideology through oppression, they have to at least be able to rationalize it amongst themselves. Vastly unequal distributions of wealth and power are always preceded (or followed) by a concept justifying that distribution; be it a concept of "divine right" from god, innate superiority, or technical skill.

This concept of cultural hegemony can be extended to the international realm. Gramsci himself focussed more on the state level, although the changes in international power relations expressed as a geo-political military balance, can be traced to fundamental changes in *social*

²²⁵ Gramsci (1971), pp 57 – 58.

²²⁶ Robert W. Cox (1983), "Gramsci, hegemony and international relations: an essay in method," *Millennium* 12(2), p 164.

²²⁷ Antonio Gramsci (1957), *The Modern Prince and other writings*, translated by Louis Marks, United States of America: International Publishers New York, pp 124 – 125.

relations domestically.²²⁸ Robert W. Cox argues that world orders are changed through the national structures of powerful core states, which influence transnational institutions, create blocs of adhering nation states that adopt the model, that in sum alter the geo-political power balance.²²⁹ This can only be attained after achieving domestic domination. Cox is right – no governing ideology can be extended across an array of states without forming a base somewhere, and before that can happen, power needs to be established through establishing cultural hegemony.

Both Gramsci and Cox wrote these pieces before the means to spread information across state boundaries became so pronounced. States now possess the direct means to communicate with an international audience through powerful international media outlets such as The BBC, Aljazeera, or Xinhua – giving them a conduit to socialize international audiences. Joseph James Alvaro finds that although China is waging an aggressive campaign for control of its global image its attempts have been largely unsuccessful. Although English language media such as Xinhuanet, People's Daily, and China Central Television News are among the top 500 most visited websites in the world – the vast majority of site views come from within China showing that their impact on global audiences is muted.²³⁰ The view that China is a benevolent power is not exactly popularized, generally speaking. Still, discourse can help understand intentions. There does however, need to be caution when studying discourse stemming from elites with an immeasurable degree of self-interest in enhancing their power.

Rising states dream of one thing and one thing only – *more*.²³¹ Security and maintaining power are the main concerns to which belief in the Thucydides trap – a theory claiming that a rising power will always come into conflict with the established one – would demand that China be contained to safeguard the world from future conflict, a dire prediction Chinese official discourse itself refutes. It makes pragmatic sense that Xinhua portrays China as benign and globally cooperative; whether considered from a *realpolitik* or trusting lens. Of course China's leaders will attempt to appear benign, even a power that aims to violently overthrow an established order would want to cultivate a peaceful image while its power is comparatively weaker. Focussing heavily on discourse does risk being tricked by a disingenuous message that does not reveal real intentions of a country's rulers.

²²⁸ Cox (1983), p 169.

²²⁹ Ibid, pp 173 – 174.

²³⁰ Alvaro (2015), p 271.

²³¹ Jonathan Kirshner (2012), "The tragedy of offensive realism: Classical realism and the rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations* 18(1), p, 58.

Be this as it may, writing off everything flowing from the Chinese government is not helpful or constructive. The problem with engaging with the Chinese dream narrative and China more broadly is that it enables and affords a certain level of prestige – often in the face of flagrant violations like the unfolding situation in Xinjiang. Future research should look to how other nations can *engage* with concepts like the Chinese dream without compromising core values. The Chinese dream is overwhelmingly presented as something that is good for China and the world.

It is possible that with greater understanding this narrative can be used to criticize China's leadership if they depart from the generally benign image that they have painted for themselves; perhaps there is the opportunity to *constrain* China with its own narrative if it fails to be a responsible power that promotes the well-being of those around.

7. Conclusion

The articulation of a Chinese dream is Xi Jinping's signature tifa that defines his rule – adopting it as his own was one of Xi's first moves after gaining power in late 2012.

The concept of zhenming or the “rectification of names” and the widespread employment of top-down slogans known as tifa across a wide array of actors is a concept inherited from the Mao era. Under Xi pushing a concerted image – both domestically and globally – has been a priority as he has entrenched allies in key positions in the CPD, centralized control over state media in “the voice of China,” and sought to extend his narrative abroad through what some have called the “Digital Silk Road.”

One problem with studying the Chinese dream is that it is a developing concept that is broad, malleable, and exceptionally plastic. There is evidence that the Chinese dream is formulated as a “space dream,” a dream for a strong army, or even a pan-Asian dream of regional economic cooperation. Overall, it is an aspirational tifa centring around an historical narrative of national rejuvenation that has been pursued by China's leaders over the course of the 20th century.

What is clear from the study of tifa is that viewing them in context is the best way to reveal patterns of development – in context tifa show continuity from leader to leader and signature tifa from previous leaders often appear in the speeches of those that follow. Tifa can build upon one another, depart, or even just repackage similar concepts, and possess a number of commonalities. All tifa act to reaffirm the necessity of the CCP in building China into a modern powerful nation and are endorsed by a central leader.

Perhaps the most significant change the Chinese dream seemed to hail was a policy shift away from Keeping a Low Profile to a new doctrine Striving for Achievement. The findings of this project do not support the contention that the Chinese dream has heralded a sustained shift through studying Xinhua's portrayal of the dream – while this was the case initially over 2014 – 2015, coverage subsequently reverted to an increased domestic focus among a decline in China dream articles generally. This project proposes the following steps to ascertain both the continued salience of the Chinese dream and whether it does in fact represent a shift towards a new foreign policy doctrine of Striving for Achievement:

1. An extension of the body of articles to include some of the years from Xi Jinping's second term (2018 – 2023).

2. The application of the current thematic frames to Peaceful Development to measure the extent to which it was presented as a globally orientated tifa in order to provide a reference point.

It was also found that there is a notable individualistic aspect to how the Chinese dream is portrayed contrary to assertions often made in the literature – accounting for 10% of all of Xinhua’s coverage. When dealing with aspirational concepts like a national dream a notable individual component could be unavoidable. Lastly, while building a strong military that can “fight and win wars” is a prerequisite for realizing the Chinese dream – framing the dream as a peaceful concept of global engagement or even a dream of individual striving was far more pronounced across Xinhua’s reporting.

Finally, the Chinese dream is a proto-type concept of Chinese exceptionalism. As a concept it is still under development but contains a semblance of principles such as tolerance and economic pragmatism that could gain global traction – especially with developing countries. China is gaining credibility globally and it is possible that other nations could rally to its banner, particularly nations in the Global South. Realizing the Chinese dream and national rejuvenation are not contingent on international ideological dominance, although it is now admitted that China requires global engagement and increased prestige to achieve this aim. It is possible that such assertions could be projected on China whether it intends them or not.

While discourse does not anticipate reality perfectly, the China dream is an aspirational tifa that is the new guiding mantra for China’s administration. It is more ambitious and flexible than what came before – whether China will succeed in meeting the abstract bar of rejuvenation is yet to be seen.

Any potential empire of the future proceeds first from the empire of the mind.

8. Bibliography

Journal Articles

Alvaro, Joseph James (2013), "Political discourse in China's English language press," *World Englishes* 32(2), pp. 147 – 168.

Alvaro, Joseph James (2015), "Analysing China's English-language media," *World Englishes* 34(2), pp 260-277.

Acharya, Amitav (2017), "After liberal hegemony: the advent of a multiplex world order," *Ethics & International Affairs* 31(3), pp 271-285.

Artstein, Ron, and Massimo Poesio (2008), "Inter-coder agreement for computational linguistics," *Computational Linguistics* 34 (4), pp 555-596.

Bing, Guan, Ying Xia and Gong Cheng (2017), "Power Structure and Media Autonomy in China: The Case of Southern Weekend," *Journal of Contemporary China* 26(104), pp 233-248.

Brüggemann, Michael (2014), "Between frame setting and frame sending: How journalists contribute to news frames," *Communication Theory*, 24(1), pp 61-82.

Callahan, William A. (2016), "China's 'Asia Dream': The Belt Road Initiative and the new regional order," *Asia Journal of Comparative Politics* 1(3), pp 226-243.

Callahan, William A. (2015), "Identity and security in China: the negative soft power of the China dream," *Politics* 35(3-4), 216-229.

Ching, C C. (1984), "Psychology and the Four Modernizations in China," *International Journal of Psychology* 19(1-4), pp 57-63.

Chunlong, Lu (2015), "Urban Chinese support for the Chinese dream: Empirical findings from seventeen cities," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 20(2), pp 143-161.

Cox, Robert W. (1983), "Gramsci, hegemony and international relations: an essay in method," *Millennium* 12(2), pp 162-175.

De Swert, Knut, "Calculating inter-coder reliability in media content analysis using Krippendorff's Alpha," *Center for Politics and Communication* (2012), pp 1-15.

Elo, Satu and Helvi Kyngäs (2008), "The qualitative content analysis process," *Journal of advanced nursing*, 62(1), pp 107-115.

Ferdinand, Peter (2016), "Westward ho – the China dream and 'one belt, one road': Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping," *International Affairs* 92(4), pp 941-957.

Feng, Guangchao Charles (2014), "Intercoder reliability indices: disuse, misuse, and abuse" *Quality & Quantity* 48 (3), pp 1803-1815.

Feng, Zhang (2013), "The rise of Chinese exceptionalism in international relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19(2), pp 305-328.

Fewsmith, Joseph (2003), "Studying the three represents," *China Leadership Monitor* 8(1), pp 1-11.

Fewsmith, Joseph (2004), "Promoting the scientific development concept," *China Leadership Monitor* 11(30), pp 1-10.

Fewsmith, Joseph (2005), "The Changing Methodology of Beijingology" In *Conference on 'Chinese Leadership, Politics, and Policy'*, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (Vol. 2), pp 1 – 9.

Grimmer, Justin and Brandon M. Stewart (2013), "Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts," *Political analysis* 21(3), pp 267-297.

Guobin, Yang (2014), "Internet activism & the party-state in China," *Daedalus* 143(2), pp 110-123.

Ho, Benjamin, "Understanding Chinese Exceptionalism: China's Rise, Its Goodness, and Greatness," *Alternatives* 39(3), pp 164-176.

Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang and Sarah E. Shannon (2005), "Three approaches to qualitative content analysis," *Qualitative health research* 15(9), pp 1277-1288.

Jian, Zhang (2015), "China's new foreign policy under Xi Jinping: towards 'Peaceful Rise 2.0'?", *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27(1), pp 5-19.

Kirshner, Jonathan (2012), "The tragedy of offensive realism: Classical realism and the rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations* 18(1), pp 53-75.

Kleine-Ahlbrandt, Stephanie and Andrew Small (2008), "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy - Is Beijing Parting with Pariahs," *Foreign Affairs* 87(1), pp 38-56.

Kristensen, Peter Marcus, and Pippa Morgan (2018), "Leadership with Chinese Characteristics," *Fudan University and Springer Nature Pte LTD*, pp 1-9.

Lombard, Matthew, Jennifer Snyder-Duch, and Cheryl Campanella Bracken (2002), "Content analysis in mass communication: Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability," *Human communication research* 28(4), pp 587-604.

Lu, Chunlong (2015), "Urban Chinese support for the Chinese dream: Empirical findings from seventeen cities," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 20(2), pp 143-161.

MacDougall, James C (2017), "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?," *Parameters* 47(2), pp 113 – 116.

Mahoney, Josef Gregory (2014), "Interpreting the Chinese dream: an exercise of political hermeneutics." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19(1), pp 15-34.

Matthes, Jörg and Matthias Kohring (2008), "The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity," *Journal of communication* 58(2), pp 258-279.

Mokry, Sabine (2017), "Whose Voices Shape China's Global Image? Links Between Reporting Conditions and Quoted Sources in News about China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 26(104), pp. 650-663.

Patapan, Haig, and Yi Wang (2018), "The Hidden Ruler: Wang Huning and the Making of Contemporary China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 27(109), pp 47-60.

Potter, W. James, and Deborah Levine-Donnerstein (1999). "Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 27(3), pp 258-284.

Quadir, Fahimul (2013), "Rising Donors and the New Narrative of 'South-South' Cooperation: what prospects for changing the landscape of development assistance programmes?," *Third World Quarterly* 34(2), pp 321-338.

Shirk, Susan L. (2007), "Changing media, changing foreign policy in China," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8(01), pp. 43-70.

Sørensen, Camilla TN. (2015), "The Significance of Xi Jinping's" Chinese Dream" for Chinese Foreign Policy: From "Tao Guang Yang Hui" to "Fen Fa You Wei"," *Journal of China and International Relations* 3(1), pp 53 – 73.

Suettinger, R. L. (2004), "The rise and descent of "peaceful rise," *China Leadership Monitor* 12(2), pp 1-10.

Wang, Jiayu (2016), "Narrative mediatisation of the "Chinese Dream" in Chinese and American media," *Journal of Language and Politics* 15(1), pp. 45-62.

Xu, Beina and Eleanor Albert (2014), "Media censorship in China." *Council on Foreign Relations* 25, p 243 - 249.

Yan, Xuetong (2014), "From keeping a low profile to striving for achievement," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7(2), pp 153-184.

Yang, Yi Edward and Xinsheng Liu (2012), "The China 'Threat' through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992 – 2006," *Journal of Contemporary China* 21(76), pp 695.

Yong, Deng (2014), "China: the post-responsible power," *The Washington Quarterly* 37(4), pp 117-132.

Yong, Wang (2016), "Offensive for defensive: the belt and road initiative and China's new grand strategy," *The Pacific Review* 29(3), pp 455-463.

Zengjun, Peng (2004), "Representation of China: An across time analysis of coverage in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 14(1), pp 53-67.

Zheng, Wang (2013), "The Chinese Dream: Concept and Context," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19(1), pp. 1-13.

Zheng, Yongnian and Sow Keat Tok (2007), "Harmonious society and harmonious world: China's policy discourse under Hu Jintao," *Briefing Series* 26.

Books

Brady, Anne-Marie (2007), *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, United States of America: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Callahan, William A. (2013), *China Dreams: 20 Visions Of The Future*, United States of America: Oxford University Press.

Ellul, Jacques (1968), *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, translated by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, United States: Alfred A. Knopf INC.

Goldman, Merle (1994), *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era*, United States: Harvard University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio (1957), *The Modern Prince and other writings*, translated by Louis Marks, United States of America: International Publishers New York.

Antonio Gramsci (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith: International Publishers.

Guobin, Yang (2000), "The liminal effects of social movements: Red Guards and the transformation of identity," in *Sociological Forum* 15(3), Kluwer Academic Publishers-Plenum Publishers, pp. 379-406.

Jung, Chang (1991), *Wild Swans*, Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers.

Karl, Rebecca E. (2010), *Mao Ze Dong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*, United States: Duke University Press.

Krippendorff, Klaus (2013), *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* 3rd Edition, United States: SAGE Publications.

Li, Junru (2006), *The China Dream: China in Peaceful Development*, Beijing China: Foreign Languages Press.

Li, Yang (2015), “Development and Communication: The Evolution of Chinese Media,” in Robin Jeffrey and Ronojoy Sen (eds.), *Media at Work in China and India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 3-24.

Mao, Tse-Tung (1965), “Fourteen Great Achievements,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* 1st Edition, China: Foreign Languages Press.

Piketty, Thomas (2014), *Capital In The Twenty-First Century*, translated by Arthur Gold Hammer, United States: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Schell, Orville and John Delury (2013), *Wealth and Power: China’s Long March to the Twenty-First Century*, Great Britain: Abacus.

Scott, David (2010), “China and the “responsibilities” of a “responsible” power—the uncertainties of appropriate power rise language,” *Asia-Pacific Review* 17(1), pp 72-96.

Shirk, Susan L. (2010), “Changing Media, Changing China,” in Susan Shirk (ed.) *Changing Media, Changing China*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp 1 - 38.

Sujian, Guo (2013), *Chinese Politics And Government*, London: Routledge.

Skalski, Paul D., Kimberly A. Neuendorf and Julie A. Cajigas (2017), “Content Analysis in the Interactive Media Age,” in Neuendorf, Kimberly A., *The content analysis guidebook*, Sage, pp 201 – 242.

Stemler, Steve (2001), “An overview of content analysis,” *Practical assessment, research & evaluation* 7(17), pp 137-146.

Thunø, Mette (2001), “Reaching out and incorporating Chinese overseas: The trans-territorial scope of the PRC by the end of the 20th century,” *The China Quarterly* 168, pp 910-929.

Vogel, Ezra F. (2011), *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, United States: Harvard University Press.

Xi, Jinping (2017), *The Governance of China II* 1st Edition, China: Foreign Languages Press.

Yang, Pei Ming (2013), “Art Tells History,” in Yang Pei Ming (Ed.) and Pearl Young (Art Ed.) *Chinese Propaganda Poster Collection: Catalogue 2013*, China: Shanghai PPAC.

Websites

China New Media Project (2013), “Guidance of Public Opinion,” available at <http://chinamediaproject.org/2013/11/05/guidance-of-public-opinion-%E8%88%86%E8%AE%BA%E5%AF%BC%E5%90%91/> accessed: 17/07/2018.

Factiva, “Export Distribution by Date,” available at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#./!/?&_suid=154017637469209369243422132663 accessed: 21/09/2018.

Freedom House (2016), “Freedom of the Press 2016 Table of Scores,” available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press-2016/table-country-scores-fotp-2016> accessed: 03/01/2017.

Hayes, Andrew, “My Macros and Code for SPSS and SAS,” available at <http://afhayes.com/spss-sas-and-mplus-macros-and-code.html> accessed: 04/08/2018.

Ma, Damien and Neil Thomas (2018), “In Xi we Trust: How Propaganda Might Be Working in the New Xi Era,” available at <https://macropolo.org/committee-analysis/in-xi-we-trust/> accessed: 12/10/2018.

News Sources

ABS News (2018), “Beijing works to rally ‘sons and daughters’ abroad to help create Chinese dream,” ABC News Online March 4, 2018, available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-04/beijing-official-urges-outreach-to-non-mainland-chinese/9506388> accessed: 20/10/2018.

BBC News (2012), “China bans foreign TV shows during prime time,” BBC News Online February 14, 2012, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-17022981> accessed: 09/09/2018.

BBC News (2015), “China internet: Xi Jinping calls for ‘cyber sovereignty,’” BBC News Online December 16, 2015, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-35109453> accessed: 10/10/2018.

BBC News (2016), “Chinese couple spend wedding night writing out communist doctrine,” BBC News Online May 21, 2016, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-36339438> accessed: 27/01/2017.

BBC News (2017), “Xi Jinping is tightening his grip on power. How did one man come to embody China’s destiny?,” BBC News Online October 13, 2017, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Thoughts_Chairman_Xi accessed: 10/01/2018.

China Daily (2014), “Background: Connotations of Chinese Dream,” China Daily Online March 15, 2014, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014npcandcppcc/2014-03/05/content_17324203.htm accessed: 12/08/2018.

China Daily (2017), “New normal in economic development,” China Daily Online October 5, 2017, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-10/05/content_32869258.htm accessed: 12/08/2018.

Forbes (2017), “China’s ‘Wolf Warrior 2’ Becomes 2nd Film In History To Reach \$800M In A Single Territory,” available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robcairn/2017/08/27/chinas-wolf-warrior-2-becomes-2nd-film-in-history-to-reach-800m-in-a-single-territory/#36b346363460> accessed: 08/10/2018.

Global Times (2017), “Xi instructs army to improve its readiness for war,” Global Times Online November 3, 2017, available at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1073479.shtml> accessed 08/10/2018.

Reuters (2007), “Chinese slogans mark Hu era,” Reuters Online September 8, 2007, available at <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-china-party-slogans/chinese-slogans-mark-hu-era-idUKMOL74807920070907> accessed: 23/01/2018.

Reuters (2018), “China takes aim at hip-hop, saying ‘low-taste content’ must stop,” Reuters Online January 22, 2018, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-censorship-hiphop/china-takes-aim-at-hip-hop-saying-low-taste-content-must-stop-idUSKBN1FB139> accessed: 09/09/2018.

The Economist (2013), “Chasing the Chinese dream,” The Economist Online May 4, 2013, at <https://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21577063-chinas-new-leader-has-been-quick-consolidate-his-power-what-does-he-now-want-his> accessed: 23/01/2018.

Quartz (2017), “All the buzz words Xi Jinping added to the Chinese Communist Party’s Constitution,” Quartz Online October 26, 2017, available at <https://qz.com/1111474/chinas-19th-party-congress-all-the-buzzwords-xi-jinping-added-to-the-chinese-communist-partys-constitution/> accessed: 24/05/2018.

South China Morning Post (2018a), “China names former internet tsar Xu Lin as new international propaganda chief,” South China Morning Post Online October 8, 2018, at

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2160623/china-names-former-internet-tsar-xu-lin-new> accessed 15/10/2018 accessed: 10/10/2018.

South China Morning Post (2018b), “Google’s privacy chief confirms existence of ‘censored Chinese search engine’ Project Dragonfly,” South China Morning Post Online September 27, 2018, at <https://www.scmp.com/tech/big-tech/article/2165934/googles-privacy-chief-confirms-existence-project-dragonfly-says-he> accessed: 10/10/2018.

South China Morning Post (2009), “The famous Mao slogan, that he never even used,” South China Morning Post Online September 25, 2009, at <https://www.scmp.com/article/693526/famous-mao-slogan-he-never-even-used> accessed:10/10/2018.

The Diplomat (2013), “Xi Jinping’s Chinese dream may be new in name, but it continues a long tradition for the Chinese Communist Party,” The Diplomat Online September 20, 2013, at <https://thediplomat.com/2013/09/the-chinese-dream-from-mao-to-xi/> accessed 29/09/2018.

The Guardian (2018), “Inside China’s audacious global propaganda campaign , The Guardian Online December 7, 2018, at <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/07/china-plan-for-global-media-dominance-propaganda-xi-jinping> accessed: 07/12/2018.

Xinhua (2013a), “1st LD Writethru-China Focus: China shows commitment to environmental protection,” Factiva July 20, 2013, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#!/?&_suid=153990110241506337534888150327 accessed: 01/04/2018.

Xinhua (2013b), “Commentary: Bo’s case shows China’s anti-corruption consensus,” Factiva July 26, 2013, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#!/?&_suid=153990110241506337534888150327 accessed: 01/04/2018.

Xinhua (2013c), “All-China Federation honours astronaut,” Factiva July 31, 2013, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#!/?&_suid=153990110241506337534888150327 accessed: 01/04/2018.

Xinhua (2015), “(Xi’s U.S. Visit) China Voice: Ten Reasons China, U.S can avoid Thucydides Trap,” Factiva September 27, 2015, at https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#!/?&_suid=153990214975208768629079110182 accessed: 04/05/2018.

Conference Papers

Brady, Anne-Marie (2017), “Magic Weapons: China’s political influence activities under Xi Jinping,” presented as a conference paper on “The corrosion of democracy under China’s global influence” to the Wilson Center at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/magic-weapons-chinas-political-influence-activities-under-xi-jinping> accessed: 26/01/2018, pp. 1 – 57.

Chenhao, Tan, Adrien Friggeri, and Lada A. Adamic (2016), "Lost in Propagation? Unfolding News Cycles from the Source," In *Proceedings of the Tenth International AAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, pp. 378-387.

Speeches

Xi, Jinping (2017a), “Full Text of Xi Jinping keynote at the World Economic Forum,” delivered at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland January 17, 2017, published online at <https://america.cgtn.com/2017/01/17/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum> accessed: 06/10/2018.

Xi, Jinping (2017b), “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,” delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China October 18, 2017, published online at

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf accessed: 22/01/2017.

Mao, Ze Dong (1957), “Speech at the Chinese Communist Party’s National Conference on Propaganda Work,” from Mao Zedong’s Selected Works Volume 5 published online at <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/...5/> accessed: 23/01/2017.

Videos

People’s Daily (2016), “China’s PLA army enlists rap-style music video to recruit young soldiers,” posted on YouTube May 2, 2016, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTdOnDSPZ_Q accessed: 09/09/2018.

Kent Löfgren (2017), “Nominal dichotomous yes/no data: Krippendorff alpha inter-rater reliability,” posted on YouTube March 3, 2017, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcC99TrynKQ&t=480s> accessed: 04/08/2018

Interviews

Acland, Henry (2018), interview conducted by Adam Osborne-Smith, phone interview, Wellington, conducted on: 20/03/2018.

9. Appendix

The Dream of the Dragon: Coding Guide

The following coding instructions are to be provided to coders and should be referred to for every article coded. Attached is a coding template – coders should place a “1” next to the relevant theme for the article number coded and a “0” next to every other theme. Coders must read the article naturally first then focus on the concept of the “Chinese dream” that the study revolves around. Furthermore, coders need to have gone through the one-hour tutorial and also be familiar with the research method document (see attached).

Thematic Frames:

a. Military/Strategic

Code articles into this frame if the predominant theme is regarding military or security concerns both domestically and internationally. Some examples include:

- Article mentions the China dream in relation to national security or mention of existential military threats such as terrorism or instability
- Militaristic appeals to patriotism or highly charged nationalism
- Presence of military hardware in relation to realising the China dream
- Mention of the PLA or other state security organs in relation to the China dream
- Expansionist/territorially assertive issues eg. Taiwanese unification, South China Sea; Hong Kong, Xinjiang, or Tibetan separatism
- Strategic concerns regarding territorial integrity
- Anything regarding maintaining sovereignty and internal security

b. Political/Domestic

Code articles into this thematic frame if the predominant theme is related to ideological or economic issues within China. Some examples include:

- Domestic economic development objectives or achievements eg. promotion of well-being of elderly care services in China, benefits of better transportation system
- Development of high-technology in China
- Domestic modernization goals
- Promotion of collective values eg. virtue of Chinese workers working hard
- Business stories
- Promotion of China model or ideological principles in a purely China context

c. Political/World

Code articles into this frame if the predominant theme is related to ideological or economic issues in the international realm. Articles in this theme will often mention one or a number of other countries and be concerned with interests outside of China – examples may include:

- Promotion of the China model or ideological principles to external nations
- Participation of China in international political bodies and development of international bodies.
- Focus on international development objectives eg. one belt, one road
- Emphasis on Asian development or sharing china's economic miracle and developing a global community
- Bi-lateral or multi-lateral trade deals
- Promotion of Chinese language overseas
- Relationships between China and other nations both economically and politically

d. Individual Dream/Personal

Articles coded into this theme must focus on an individual dream with reference to a greater concept of a Chinese dream. The article must be predominantly concerned with specific individuals or discussions of individual dreams in relation to the Chinese dream. Examples could include:

- A story that focusses on the success or actions of an individual (**but not high political figures such as Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, members of The Standing Committee of the Politburo, or other such figures**) as an exemplar of fulfilling the China dream
- A virtuous individual held up as an example of the Chinese dream but not high political figures
- Discussion of individual dreams in relation to the Chinese dream
- The life of an individual improving their circumstances in a modern China
- Promise of **individual prosperity** upon migrating to China eg. “Land of Opportunity” in the classic American sense
- Discussion of the Chinese dream as an individual dream
- Be wary of examples where an individual mentions pursuing dreams, and is from China, but there is no mention at all of a greater collective “Chinese dream.” The following example should be coded as **“irrelevant to study”** as it does not mention the Chinese dream.

“Huang was also active in charitable causes. He volunteered to teach in southwest **China’s** Tibetan Autonomous Region and encouraged impoverished local students to pursue their **dreams.**”

e. Irrelevant to Study

Any articles that contain the words China and dream, but they are too diffuse to be considered a “China dream” article as in the example given above, should be coded as irrelevant. Different formulations of the China dream eg. “China’s world dream,” “The great dream of the Chinese people,” or the extension of the China dream into the “Asia-Pacific dream” **are relevant.** If the terms “China dream” or “Chinese dream” appear in the article or title it is certainly relevant. The key commonality tying these is that they are

connected to a national dream. The following example should be coded as relevant as the dream referred to is that of a national Chinese dream:

“Throughout history, the rise of a new major economy has always led to fierce competition for hegemony among major players. A fast-developing **China**, however, will not go down that old road. The **dream** it pursues is that of national rejuvenation, rather one featuring colonialism, militarism or hegemony.”

Articles expressing the following should be coded as irrelevant:

- Anything that comes up as a “news advisory” and is not a proper article (just talks about other Xinhua articles)
- The terms “China” and “dream” are too diffuse for it to be considered a China dream article or no greater collective Chinese dream is mentioned
- A “dream” that is mentioned in an individual sense without any mention of the greater collective Chinese dream as in the Huang example given

If more than one theme is present, go through the following steps in this order until one theme emerges:

1. Theme is mentioned in the headline and is discussed about as much as the other theme
2. Theme is most discussed
3. First mentioned in article

Coders will need to use their intuitions and the above guide should be applied systematically; but not rigidly. If the answer is not clear after reference to all the parts above coders should follow their stomachs. If the word “political” is used frequently in the article it is likely to be a politically themed article – there is some room for coder intuitions.

The flow chart below is a step by step process coders must follow as they analyse each article:

- 1. Make sure the article number is correct and lined up with the coding sheet**



- 2. Read the article naturally from the headline to the last sentence**



- 3. Skim major parts and determine if it is an article pertaining to the China dream or if the article is irrelevant**



- 4. Is there a clear theme or is it ambiguous? If it is ambiguous follow the steps mentioned on page 3**



- 5. Code article into relevant theme**