

A Cross-Regional Comparative Study on the Recognition of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

Rong He

School of Journalism, Communication University of China, Beijing, 100024

Email : ahxiah@163.com

Abstract: The concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is a top-level value proposition prominently featured in China's international communications. While many scholars have examined its global reception, their research often adopts a holistic perspective and tends to focus on negative coverage. This study takes a different approach. It deconstructs the concept into five dimensions: a political environment of mutual trust, a living environment of security, an economic environment of prosperity, a cultural environment of diversity, and an ecological environment of sustainability, with a specific focus on positive feedback. Specifically, employing content analysis, this research examines all articles published in the International Forum column of the People's Daily between January 18, 2017, and November 24, 2022. A quantitative analysis of 375 articles meeting the research criteria reveals and analyzes regional variations in the acceptance levels of both the overarching concept and its five-dimensional connotations. The findings offer valuable insights for tailoring the communication of this concept across different regions in the future.

Keywords: Community with a Shared Future for Mankind; Cross-regional Comparison; Five-Dimensional Connotation; People's Daily

The concept of a "Community with a Shared Future" has become a key tenet in the Chinese government's recent discourse on human society. Introduced as a new discursive framework in the 2011 white paper "China's Peaceful Development," it is premised on identifying renewed meaning in humanity's collective interests and universal values. The report from 18th CPC National Congress called for "advocating the concept of a shared future for mankind, accommodating other countries' legitimate concerns in the pursuit of national interests." President Xi Jinping first elaborated on the connotation of the concept of a 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind' during his 2013 speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). Over the following years, he further systematically expounded upon this vision on numerous occasions, both domestically and internationally.

On January 18, 2017, Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech entitled "Work Together to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" at the United Nations Office in Geneva. On February 10 of the same year, the phrase "building a community with a shared future for mankind" was incorporated into a UN resolution for the first time. Subsequently, this concept has been written into several other important UN documents, including resolutions of the UN Security Council. It has become a manifestation of Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving global challenges, and stands as a core value that China should prioritize in its international communications.

I. Defining the Five-Dimensional Connotation of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

Regarding the connotation of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, President Xi, in his January 18 speech, elaborated that "the international community should make efforts in building partnerships, fostering a security architecture, promoting economic development, encouraging civilizational exchange, and advancing ecological conservation." Specifically, it entails "persisting in dialogue and consultation to build a world of lasting peace," "upholding joint contribution and shared benefits to build a world of universal security," "adhering to cooperation

and win-win results to build a world of common prosperity," "promoting exchange and mutual learning to build an open and inclusive world," and "advocating green and low-carbon development to build a clean and beautiful world."

Academia has also interpreted the connotation of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind. For instance, Qu Xing interpreted the concept of a harmonious world view through five aspects: "political multipolarity, security through mutual trust, balanced economic development, cultural diversity, and environmental sustainability"^[1]. Liang Meng suggested that the scientific connotation of President Wang's discourse on the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind can be researched and interpreted through five dimensions: a political community, a security community, an economic community, a civilization community, and an ecological community^[2].

Integrating the original text of President Xi's January 18 speech with prior scholarly interpretations, this paper divides the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind into the following five dimensions: a political environment of mutual trust, a living environment of security, an economic environment of prosperity, a cultural environment of diversity, and an ecological environment of sustainability. Through quantitative analysis of articles in the database, this study compares the specific levels of acceptance of the concept and its five-dimensional connotation across different regions.

This research conducts a cross-regional comparison along two dimensions. The first dimension is geographically oriented, involving comparisons across different countries and continents. The second dimension is development-oriented, comparing the acceptance of the concept between the "Global South" and "Global North" based on wealth disparities. Text is a manifestation of discourse, and discourse is influenced by ideology. Such a cross-regional comparison aims to facilitate the localized promotion of this concept tailored to specific conditions and to implement a multi-layered communication strategy internationally.

2. Current State of Research on the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

2.1 Current State of Research

The domestic academic research output on the concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is vast. The earliest article on the CNKI platform with the theme of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is Qu Xing's 2013 publication, "The Value Foundation of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." This article posits that the global values embedded in the concept encompass an interdependent view of international power, a perspective of common interests, a concept of sustainable development, and an approach to global governance^[3]. Li Aimin explored its theoretical origins, arguing that the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind integrates the internationalist thought of Marx and Engels on the nature of community with the Chinese historical and cultural traditions of "tianxiaism" (all-under-heaven) and "harmonism," emerging as a distinctive Chinese form of "internationalism" cultivated in the soil of 21st-century China^[4]. Liu Tongfang contends that building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, serving as Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving global governance challenges, represents an original contribution to the theoretical development of historical materialism in the 21st century^[5]. Xu Yanling et al. argue that the value implication of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind possesses triple dimensions: historical, practical, and future-oriented^[6]. Ming Hao examined the relationship between the "Belt and Road" initiative and the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, suggesting that the ideas and strategic pathways provided by the Belt and Road lend realistic feasibility to the Community^[7]. Hu Zhengrong, however, argues that while the Belt and Road Initiative essentially serves as the implementation plan for the Community, its media coverage in countries along the routes—already limited—often portrays it more as an economic and trade cooperation plan, overlooking connotations such as people-to-people exchanges and mutual understanding^[8].

Among the numerous discussions, the current state of the international communication of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is particularly noteworthy. This is because the concept is, by its very nature, a universal one that transcends race, nation, and even civilization. For it to take root in other regions, it must first be understood and recognized by others. Given that promoting a concept requires media attention, considerable scholarly attention has been focused on analyzing foreign media coverage. Gao Jinping and others argue that the U.S. media has shown a pattern of minimal attention and frequent misinterpretation in its coverage of the concept^[9]. Xu Yongbin et al. found that in German media coverage, topics like the "Chinese Dream" and the "Belt and Road Initiative" received more attention than the concept of a "Community of Shared Future for Mankind." The discourse surrounding this concept was largely confined to exchanges between Chinese and German leaders, with limited and monotonous dissemination methods, resulting in low public awareness and acceptance among German citizens^[10]. Liu Xinlu et al. noted that direct coverage of this concept in Arabic mainstream media, such as Al-Riyadh, was relatively scarce. However, this was not due to deliberate avoidance by Arabic media or audiences but rather to their inability to accurately grasp the true meaning of such political terminology^[11]. Li Huanhuan et al. pointed out that the concept of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind faces resistance and smear campaigns from some capitalist countries on the international stage. To address China's relatively weak international discourse power, they emphasized the need to strengthen global discourse influence, reduce cultural discount, and leverage positive feedback effects in communication^[12]. He Fangbin, stepping outside the media sphere, analyzed the attitudes of foreign elites toward this concept, revealing regionally varied reception. Elite individuals in the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia tended to hold negative perceptions, while those in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America exhibited more positive attitudes^[13]. Zhou Jiye proposed that top-level planning should focus on the theme of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, enhancing its global discourse dissemination capabilities, actively exploring new public diplomacy pathways, and scientifically constructing an external communication discourse system^[14]. Xu Qiqi et al. argued that the external dissemination of such concepts should prioritize methods and approaches, emphasizing targeted communication with concrete representations to achieve twice the result with half the effort. Ning Youjin et al. examined the international recognition of this concept during the pandemic era, highlighting challenges posed by Western countries' escalating confrontational thinking, persistent negativity, unilateralism, and opportunistic behavior in global pandemic responses^[15].

2.2 Research Innovation and Research Hypotheses

The research has yielded fruitful results, but two issues remain insufficiently addressed. First, while researchers emphasize the need to avoid treating the dissemination of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" as a mere empty slogan and instead provide it with vivid, engaging content, they still rely solely on the overall concept of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" as a keyword for collecting data on foreign media coverage. This approach leads to a narrow research scope and an inadequate sample size. Second, in the research process, scholars have placed excessive emphasis on international negative opinions while neglecting the empirical analysis and summary of existing positive feedback. According to Lazarsfeld's two-step flow theory, the attitudes of opinion leaders can directly influence the general public, and these attitudes can be either positive or negative. Overemphasizing negative feedback may overlook the positive voices of international friends and their potential role in shaping public opinion on the global stage. In some ways, this oversight could make international communication efforts less effective.

This study also focuses on the international communication effectiveness of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept. Compared to the aforementioned research, its innovations lie in the following aspects:

First, the study selects as its research sample the International Forum column of People's Daily,

China's leading mainstream media. The contributors to this column are primarily pro-China figures from various countries, all of whom are social elites, including state leaders. This approach effectively avoids the issue of overlooking positive voices mentioned in previous research. Second, this study conducts a cross-regional comparative analysis of the reception of the specific connotations of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." Previous research has found that many in the international community perceive the concept as a mere empty slogan. Therefore, analyzing the acceptance of its concrete implications holds practical significance, enabling us to tailor our international communication strategies in the future—adjusting news reporting to local needs and circumstances.

The research hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H1: There are differences in the overall acceptance of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept across different continents.

H2: There are differences in the focus on the five key dimensions of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept across different continents.

H3: There are differences in the overall acceptance of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept among countries at different levels of development.

H4: There are differences in the focus on the five key dimensions of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept among countries at different levels of development.

3. Method of research

3.1 Sample

This study employs a content analysis method, using the International Forum column of People's Daily as the research object. A keyword search for "International Forum" was conducted in the People's Daily Image and Text Database, yielding over 4,400 articles. The author systematically reviewed all articles published from January 18, 2017 (the date of President Xi Jinping's UN speech) to November 24, 2022, and excluded the following three categories:

Commentary articles written by domestic experts and scholars (as they do not represent foreign perspectives);

Articles not focused on China;

Articles authored by international organizations (as the authors' affiliations lack regional specificity, which does not align with the study's objectives).

After applying these criteria, the final sample consisted of 375 articles for analysis.

3.2 Measure Variables

The variables measured in this study include two independent variables and two dependent variables.

The independent variables are geographic region (hereinafter referred to as Independent Variable 1) and the development level of the country (hereinafter referred to as Independent Variable 2). Independent Variable 1 is based on the continent of the author's affiliated country, categorized as Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, Latin America, and Oceania. (Given the significant differences between North America and Latin America, they are counted separately; other countries are classified according to their actual continent). Independent Variable 2 classifies countries as Global North (developed countries) or Global South (developing countries). This information is objective.

This study also has two dependent variables. The first is whether the article explicitly mentions the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" or other phrases containing "community" (hereinafter referred to as Dependent Variable 1). This variable is an objective, quantifiable measure. The second dependent variable is the article's thematic focus (hereinafter referred to as Dependent Variable 2), which constitutes the primary focus of the data analysis. The article themes are classified into five types based on the five core dimensions of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: a political environment of mutual trust, a living environment of security, an economic environment of prosperity, a cultural environment of diversity, and an ecological environment of sustainability.

To ensure thematic clarity, for articles addressing multiple themes, the method employed was to code only the primary theme. The specific judgment principle adhered to a hierarchy: Title > Lead Paragraph > Word Frequency Analysis. Specifically, if the title clearly indicated a theme, the title was used. For example, the article "Addressing Climate Change: China Honors Its Commitments" was categorized under the ecological environment theme. If the title was ambiguous, the lead paragraph was used for judgment. For instance, the article "New Hope and Opportunities" had an unclear title, but its lead paragraph – "Sports can enhance friendship among people of all countries and strengthen people's confidence and willpower to overcome difficulties." – led to its classification under the cultural environment theme. For articles where neither the title nor the lead provided clear thematic direction, a full-text word frequency analysis was conducted using Hanabi website (<https://hanabi.cn/h2/index>), and the theme was determined based on high-frequency keywords.

To maximize the objectivity of the thematic coding, another researcher was invited to independently analyze the themes of 50 sample articles. The intercoder reliability was 98% (49 articles with matching judgments), meeting the required reliability standard. Subsequently, the author completed the thematic coding for the remaining articles independently.

4 Research Finding

4.1 Basic data statistics

The 375 sample articles originated from 89 countries, spanning Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania, North America, and Latin America. Twelve countries contributed more than 10 articles each, namely: Thailand (26 articles), France (22), the United Kingdom (20), Russia (18), Laos (17), Brazil (14), South Africa (14), Japan (14), Pakistan (13), the United States (12), Mexico (12), and Egypt (10).

Authors from Asia contributed the most articles (147), followed by Europe (111), Latin America (52), Africa (46), North America (13), and Oceania (6).

The majority of authors publishing in the International Forum were elites from Global South countries, contributing 252 articles—more than double the number from Global North countries (123).

Among the 375 articles, those focusing on the economic environment were the most prevalent, totaling 163 articles and accounting for nearly half of the sample. The frequency of the remaining themes, in descending order, was: cultural environment (82 articles), political environment (58 articles), living environment (58 articles), and ecological environment (14 articles).

4.2 Correlation Analysis of Data

As mentioned previously, this study treats the explicit mention of the "community" concept and the article's theme as dependent variables, with the continent of origin and development level serving as independent variables. The aim is to determine whether correlations exist between the independent and dependent variables. Since all variables involved in this study—both independent

and dependent—are categorical variables (without inherent order, only typological differences), the data analysis was conducted using the Chi-square test.

4.2.1 There are differences in the overall acceptance of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept across different continents.

A Chi-square test was conducted between Independent Variable 1 (continent) and Dependent Variable 1 (explicit mention of the concept). The results, considering the six continents as a whole, indicated a significant relationship between the variables, confirming a correlation between the continent and whether the concept was explicitly mentioned.

Specifically, African countries had the highest proportion of articles mentioning the concept, at 50%. The ranking of continents by this proportion, from highest to lowest, was as follows: Asia (37.4%), Europe (28.8%), Latin America (23.1%), Oceania (16.7%), and North America (7.7%).

Pairwise Chi-square tests between continents yielded 15 statistical comparisons. Among these, 11 pairs showed no significant difference in the likelihood of explicitly mentioning the concept, meaning the difference was not statistically significant. Significant differences were found in the following four pairs: North America vs. Asia, North America vs. Africa, Latin America vs. Asia, and Europe vs. Africa.

Therefore, it is concluded that Hypothesis 1 is largely supported. However, the overall grasp of the concept does not show statistically significant differences between every pair of continents.

4.2.2 There are differences in the focus on the five key dimensions of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept across different continents.

A Chi-square test was conducted between Independent Variable 2 (development level) and Dependent Variable 1 (explicit mention of the concept). The results showed a p-value of 0.006 between these variables, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference. The proportion of articles mentioning the concept was 23.6% in developed countries (Global North) and 37.7% in developing countries (Global South). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported. Specifically, the acceptance of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and its related concepts is higher in developing countries than in developed countries.

4.2.3 There are differences in the overall acceptance of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept among countries at different levels of development.

A Chi-square test was conducted between Independent Variable 1 (continent) and Dependent Variable 2 (thematic preference). The results revealed a p-value of 0.003, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference in thematic preferences across continents overall. Based on this analysis, the focus of each continent on the five dimensions of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is as follows:

North America: Economic Environment = Cultural Environment > Ecological Environment > Living Environment > Political Environment

Latin America: Economic Environment > Political Environment > Living Environment > Cultural Environment > Ecological Environment

Africa: Political Environment > Cultural Environment > Economic Environment > Living Environment > Ecological Environment

Oceania: Economic Environment > Political Environment = Living Environment = Cultural Environment > Ecological Environment

Europe: Economic Environment > Cultural Environment > Living Environment > Political Environment > Ecological Environment

Asia: Economic Environment > Living Environment > Cultural Environment > Political Environment > Ecological Environment

Specifically, with the exception of Africa, the most preferred theme across all continents was economic issues. Countries in Latin America placed the highest emphasis on economic development, with 55.8% of all articles published by elites from this region in the International Forum focusing primarily on the economic environment. The proportions for other continents, in descending order, were: Oceania (50%), Asia (44.9%), Europe (44.1%), North America (38.5%), and Africa (28.3%).

Attention to the ecological environment was relatively low across all continents. Except for the Americas, where it ranked fourth among the themes (15.4%), it was the least-discussed theme on all other continents. Oceania, with the smallest sample size, had no mentions at all, while Asia and Europe, with larger samples, showed very low proportions at 1.4% and 7.2%, respectively.

Regarding the political environment dimension, Africa demonstrated the greatest emphasis on political mutual trust with China, with 30.4% of its articles focusing on this theme—a proportion even exceeding its focus on economic development.

4.2.4 There are differences in the focus on the five key dimensions of the "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" concept among countries at different levels of development.

A Chi-square test was conducted between Independent Variable 2 (development level) and Dependent Variable 2 (thematic preference). The result showed a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two variables. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Based on this analysis, the focus of the "Global South" (developing countries) on the five dimensions of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is as follows:

Developing Countries: Economic Environment > Political Environment > Cultural Environment > Living Environment > Ecological Environment

The thematic preference order for the "Global North" (developed countries) is:

Developed Countries: Economic Environment > Cultural Environment > Living Environment > Ecological Environment > Political Environment

5. Conclusion

The chi-square tests confirmed all four hypotheses proposed in this study. However, this does not imply the results are self-evident. Several noteworthy conclusions can be summarized.

First, the overall recognition of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is to be improved. The articles published in the International Forum are written by foreign elites, presumably with a friendly stance towards China. It can be inferred that this group has greater exposure to Chinese concepts and a relatively higher acceptance level compared to the general foreign population. Nevertheless, the explicit mention rate of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and related concepts is not that high. Even among Global South countries, the proportion actively mentioning the concept is only 37.7%, compared to 23.6% in Global North countries. Mentions of the concept appeared in various forms: directly in titles (e.g., "China–Africa Solidarity in Fighting COVID–19 Exemplifies the True Meaning of a Community with a Shared Future," "The Vitality of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind Continues to Shine"), within lead paragraphs (e.g., "As long as the light of the concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind shines, we can fill the world with warmth and great love through solidarity and cooperation"), or as contextual variants (e.g., "Thailand–China Community with a Shared Future," "Asia–Pacific Community with a Shared Future," "Community with a Shared

Future for Health").

Second, beyond the universal focus on China's role in global economic development, another common emphasis across most regions is the cultural environment, specifically exchanges between different civilizations and systems. Attention to the cultural environment ranked second in North America, Africa, Europe, and Oceania, and third in Asia. This indicates that cultural exchanges with other regions should be strengthened.

Third, although both are developing regions geographically distant from China, Latin America and Africa show significant differences in their overall acceptance of the concept and their thematic focus. As mentioned, the mention rate among authors from Latin America is 23.1%, compared to 50% for Africa. Regarding the focus on the five dimensions, Africa prioritizes a political environment of mutual trust (interpretable as partnership), with the economic environment ranking only third. This is not because economic relations with China are unimportant to Africa, but rather suggests that sufficient trust established through prior economic cooperation has allowed the focus to shift towards political and cultural dimensions. In contrast, Latin America's focus on the economic environment is the highest among all continents at 55.8%. For Latin America, with its relative economic challenges, economic issues serve as the primary entry point for promoting the concept.

The study has limitations. First, as the authors are not from China, their Chinese writing proficiency is unknown. Their articles likely underwent translation and editorial processes, potentially altering the original intent and introducing bias into the analysis, though this is an unavoidable objective circumstance. Second, the sample size for some continents is small (e.g., Oceania with 6 articles, North America with 13), which, while indicative of attitudes, limits the robustness of conclusions. More samples from these regions would enhance the study's rigor.

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