

The Impact of the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation on the World: Taking the Belt and Road Initiative as an Example

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Abstract: As China emerges in global affairs, the rise of China and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation have become one of the focal points on the international stage today. This paper takes the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as an example and deeply explores the impact of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on the international community. The theory of the Thucydides Trap and the international attention sparked by China's rise are focused, and a combination of strategic research and literature review is employed to systematically analyze the initiative's performance from both strategic and cultural perspectives. The study finds that the BRI reflects China's multiple roles as a global economic participant and an advocate for international cooperation; meanwhile, it also triggers potential challenges of geopolitical competition and the Thucydides Trap. The conclusion emphasizes a profound understanding of the positive impact of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on the world, providing wise references for the cooperation and stability of the international community. This research provides an in-depth and comprehensive perspective on the evolution of China's role in global perception.

Keywords: Great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Belt and Road initiative, Community of a shared future for mankind, International cooperation, Global governance system

1. Introduction

In the context of the 21st century, with the deepening of globalization and the gradual shift in international power dynamics, China's rapid rise has become an undeniable force in global politics, economics, and cultural exchanges. Particularly with the strategic goal of the "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation" being set forth and pursued, China's influence on the global stage has been increasingly magnified, sparking widespread attention worldwide regarding its development trajectory and its impact on the international order. Against this backdrop, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by China, as one of the key measures to achieve this strategic goal, not only reflects a new pattern of China's opening up but also provides new opportunities for cooperation within the international community.

This article analyzes the BRI from both strategic and cultural perspectives, reflecting China's role as a major world power and its determination and actions toward building a community with a shared future for mankind. Through this initiative, China actively participates in global governance,

contributing to cooperation and win-win outcomes in the international community. Overall, the impact of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on the world, exemplified by the BRI, encompasses both strategic and cultural dimensions. This process not only provides China with opportunities to achieve its own development goals but also creates new possibilities for cooperation and mutual prosperity among nations. By thoroughly analyzing these two perspectives, this paper can more comprehensively understand the positive role of the Chinese nation's rejuvenation in building a community with a shared future for all human beings and provide wiser references for cooperation and stability in the international community.

2. Research Background

2.1. The Thucydides Trap Arising from China's Rise

Thucydides Trap [1] is an international relations term derived from ancient Greek historian Thucydides' analysis of the Peloponnesian War. He stated, "Sparta was compelled to go to war with Athens because of the fear of Athens' growth and its impact [2]." In modern international politics, this concept is used to describe how a rising great power causes security fears in the existing hegemonic state, thereby increasing the likelihood of conflict between the two.

In the context of China's ascent, the Thucydides Trap chiefly pertains to the anxieties and oppositions of established great powers prompted by the swift expansion of China's economic and military prowess. The psychological inclination towards strategic rivalry and confrontation could escalate tensions, adversely affecting the harmonious stability and collective progress of the international community.

As an indispensable major power in the global political and economic landscape, China's development path, foreign policy, and international cooperation strategies differ from other countries. Undoubtedly, China's rapid rise will have a profound impact on the international order, geopolitical patterns, and global economic development.

Given the international community's limited understanding of China's strategic intentions, policy system, and cultural characteristics, this paper aims to take the BRI as a case study to reveal China's strategic layout and policy orientation on a global scale, thereby providing an empirical basis for the understanding of China's unique cultural values and external communication methods. This multidimensional analysis helps clarify misunderstandings and concerns of the international community regarding China's development dynamics, while also providing a more solid theoretical and practical basis for global cooperation and mutual benefits.

2.2. The Belt and Road Initiative

The BRI was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visits to Central Asia and Southeast Asia in 2013 [3], aiming to deepen global connectivity and economic integration. As an important international cooperation strategy of China, it is divided into two core components: the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". The former, following the ancient Silk Road route, strengthens economic cooperation by enhancing infrastructure construction from China to Central Asia and Europe. The latter, by constructing and upgrading port facilities, ensures maritime route safety, connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe to advance maritime economic cooperation. This dual-track strategy not only promotes cooperation in the economic, cultural, and political domains between China and the countries along the route but also injects new momentum into the reform of the global governance system, aiming to create a more open, inclusive, balanced, and mutually beneficial new pattern of globalization.

3. Strategy

3.1. The Chinese Dream and Its International Significance

General Secretary Xi Jinping first introduced the concept of the Chinese Dream on November 29, 2012, during the first group study session of the 18th Central Politburo. At the meeting, he stated, "The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest Chinese Dream of our nation in modern times." He underscored the core essence of the "Chinese Dream" as the attainment of national prosperity, revitalization of the nation, and well-being of the people. The Chinese Dream is not merely a dream for the Chinese people; both its substance and scope reflect significant international significance.

Firstly, the Chinese Dream has a strategic positioning of peaceful development. The concept of peaceful development proposed by Xi Jinping is not only the cornerstone of China's foreign strategy but also a crucial safeguard for the international community's collective pursuit of peace, stability, and prosperity. This strategic thought emphasizes that the ultimate goal of China's development is to achieve national modernization through peaceful means and to promote the building of a community with a shared future for all humans. China's unwavering commitment to the path of peaceful development means adhering to the principles of fairness and cooperation in international affairs, aiming to resolve international disputes through dialogue and consultation, and opposing all forms of hegemonism and power politics. This strategic positioning not only helps maintain the stability of the international order but also provides reliable policy guidance for China's interactions with other countries, ensuring that China's development interests and the peaceful coexistence of the international community mutually reinforce and benefit each other.

Second, the Chinese Dream intertwines with international aspirations. In meetings between the heads of state of China and the United States, President Xi Jinping emphasized that the Chinese Dream is not a closed-off nationalist dream but an open and inclusive concept that encourages people from all nations to pursue their own dreams while engaging in dialogue and cooperation with the dreams of other nations [4]. This perspective proposes a new concept in international relations: achieving harmonious coexistence of dreams across different countries and regions by enhancing understanding, expanding consensus, and deepening cooperation. This not only aids in advancing the reform and improvement of the global governance system but also provides solutions to the common challenges faced by the international community.

The Chinese Dream, as a vision for peace and happiness, extends far beyond national borders. In the context of deepening globalization, the welfare of people from all nations is increasingly interconnected. The realization of the Chinese Dream is not only crucial for the Chinese people but also has a significant influence on the future well-being of people worldwide. The Chinese Dream emphasizes cooperation and mutual benefits to promote the sustainability and inclusiveness of global development, extending beyond mere economic growth to encompass multidimensional progress such as social justice and environmental protection. Under this vision, China is committed to exploring new development models with other countries, promoting an open world economy, strengthening global economic governance, and offering Chinese solutions to global issues such as poverty, climate change, and pandemics. In this way, the Chinese Dream has become a common aspiration for all humanity in pursuit of a better life, reflecting China's global vision and historical responsibility as a responsible major country.

Third, the Chinese Dream emphasizes the coordination between peaceful development and national rights and interests. The realization of the Chinese Dream is inseparable from a peaceful and stable international environment and relations. However, peaceful development does not mean giving up the maintenance of national sovereignty and interests. While adhering to peaceful development, China is also committed to safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests through diplomatic means

and international law. This balancing strategy requires finding the right equilibrium between adhering to principles and being flexible in response. This aspect of China's policy reflects respect for international law and the basic norms of international relations, while also indicating that China is willing to adopt peaceful rather than confrontational means in defending its interests. This strategy not only helps China protect its developmental achievements but also contributes to maintaining peace and stability in the international community and promoting the healthy development of a rules-based international order.

3.2. Chinese-style Modernization and the BRI

Chinese-style modernization involves creatively transforming and innovatively developing upon the experience of Western modernization, adhering to a path that is distinctly Chinese. This section links the concept of Chinese-style modernization with the BRI, explaining how the initiative can modernize the national governance system and capabilities, promote social harmony and holistic human development, and further the establishment of a community with a shared future for humankind.

The core characteristics of Chinese-style modernization can be summarized as follows [5]: firstly, it rejects the Western linear evolution logic and the binary opposition framework of "tradition-modernity", emphasizing the continuity and diversity of culture. Secondly, the development model of Chinese-style modernization does not center on capital but rather on achieving comprehensive human development as its fundamental goal. Lastly, Chinese-style modernization emphasizes a global perspective on the basis of win-win cooperation, opposing the egocentric and self-serving modernization approach. China is committed to promoting a modernization path that considers global interests and promotes the common development of all humanity, as demonstrated through initiatives such as the BRI, showcasing China's commitment and efforts to build a community with a shared future for humankind.

According to research on the civilizational logic of Chinese-style modernization, three elements can be distilled: modernization of governance, modernization of society, and modernization of individuals. Retelling the history of human modernization from the perspective of a community with a shared future for all human beings, confidently and consciously constructing an autonomous knowledge system of modernization.

In terms of governance modernization, the BRI showcases the resilience and openness of China's socialist governance system by providing a diverse cooperation framework including financial support, policy coordination, and cooperation mechanism construction. It has promoted policy communication and governance capacity enhancement among participating countries, while also offering new ideas and models for global governance, enhancing countries' ability to address global issues. In terms of social modernization, the BRI emphasizes win-win cooperation and common development. Promoting personnel exchanges and cultural exchanges deepens friendship and mutual trust between people from different countries along the route, providing a solid foundation for social harmony and cultural exchanges. This cooperation is not limited to the economic field but also covers education, technology, healthcare, culture, and other areas, aiming to create a shared and jointly developed model for social development. Finally, the human modernization strategy of the BRI aims to improve the living standards and quality of life of people in countries along the route. By jointly building projects such as infrastructure and industrial parks, it has created numerous job opportunities, promoted the dissemination of knowledge and skills, and enhanced the quality of people's lives. Through this global cooperation platform, China demonstrates its commitment to promoting inclusive growth and sustainable development on a global scale, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the building of a more prosperous and harmonious international society.

4. Culture

4.1. The Harmony Culture of Chinese Tradition and The Alignment with the BRI

Throughout its long history, Chinese civilization has been deeply rooted in the pursuit of peace, with its diplomatic interactions illustrating a profound commitment to peace. Ancient China, through the overland Silk Road and the maritime expeditions of Zheng He, demonstrated its willingness for openness and cultural exchange, all without the footsteps of aggression or colonization. This unique diplomatic tradition not only reflects the fundamental characteristics of ancient Chinese foreign policy but also signifies a lasting confidence in civilization and a firm commitment to peaceful coexistence. Throughout the course of history, China has demonstrated its long-standing adherence to and inheritance of the values of peace as an ancient civilization, which holds significant implications in the development history of international relations.

Entering the modern era, despite suffering from the oppression and enslavement of colonial powers, China, in its process of resurgence, did not fall into the "Thucydides Trap" but instead adhered to the strategic choice of peaceful development. This choice not only reflects China's inheritance of its historical traditions but also demonstrates China's profound understanding of the modern international system and its responsible attitude towards global peace and stability. This diplomacy, centered on win-win cooperation, showcases China's constructive role as a responsible major country in global governance.

The proposal of the BRI represents an innovative extension of China's concept of peaceful development in the context of the new era. This initiative is both an essential component of China's strategy of opening up to the outside world and a proactive attempt by China to promote the construction of an international political and economic order that is fairer. The ancient Silk Road of China served both as a channel for commodity trade and a bridge for the exchange of cultures, technologies, religions, and other civilizations. With trade activities along the Silk Road came the dissemination of cultural ideas and technological knowledge, promoting the common development and prosperity of countries and regions along the route. Drawing inspiration from the spirit of ancient peaceful trade, the BRI emphasizes infrastructure constructions such as railways, highways, and ports, aiming to create an interconnected cooperation platform that is equal and open.

Under the BRI, China has signed cooperation agreements with multiple countries and jointly constructed a series of landmark projects, such as the China-Europe Railway Express in Central Asia and the China-Laos Railway. Furthermore, China is also working to address the bottleneck problem of infrastructure financing in developing countries through the construction of financial institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, showcasing the leading role of the BRI in modern international cooperation. This new model of international cooperation not only continues the ancient Chinese tradition of peaceful trade along the Silk Road but also provides new solutions for addressing the challenges in the new era. This initiative showcases China's contributions and responsibilities in promoting establishing a community with a shared future for all human beings, as well as its determination and wisdom in promoting peace, development, and international cooperation in the era of globalization.

4.2. China's New Diplomatic Concept and the BRI

4.2.1. Promoting the Building of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

In today's era of globalization, China has become an indispensable force, with its role on the international stage becoming increasingly prominent. With rapid economic growth and expanding international influence, there are high expectations from the international community regarding China's role. As a responsible major country, China is expected to play a greater role in promoting

global development and addressing global challenges. Against this backdrop, the concept of the Community of Shared Future for Mankind (CSFM) has emerged, aiming to promote global cooperation, jointly address challenges, and achieve common development. This concept not only highlights China's responsible attitude towards the international community but also reflects its contribution to the reform and improvement of the global governance system.

At the opening ceremony of the Third Belt and Road International Cooperation Forum on October 18, 2023, General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech entitled "Building an Open, Inclusive, Interconnected, and Sustainable World." In his speech, Xi summarized profound insights from the ten years since the proposal of the BRI, emphasizing that human society is a closely connected community with a shared future, and China's development will contribute to global well-being. This viewpoint advocates mutual understanding and support in international relations, emphasizing the interdependence among countries in the context of globalization. The concept of win-win cooperation is considered key to achieving major international endeavors, particularly crucial in multilateralism and international cooperation. Through joint efforts, the international community can overcome challenges and achieve common goals, highlighting the importance of this spirit of cooperation in safeguarding global peace and development [6].

The CSFM concept provides a new platform for international cooperation. This initiative emphasizes that countries, regardless of their size, wealth, or culture, should be closely connected and jointly tackle global issues and challenges. This implies that in today's era of globalization, no country can stand alone or solve problems independently outside of the world. The CSFM concept requires countries to transcend traditional national interests and engage in international affairs with a more open and inclusive mindset, collectively promoting world peace and development.

In the process of promoting the CSFM concept, peace and development are two core themes. Peace is the prerequisite for development, and development is the guarantee of peace. China advocates for a new type of international relations characterized by mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation, opposing all forms of hegemonism and power politics. China emphasizes resolving international disputes and differences through dialogue rather than confrontation and through cooperation rather than conflict. This concept provides new ideas and methods for maintaining world peace and offers new approaches to addressing complex international issues.

The BRI, as a significant practice by China to promote the CSFM concept, has brought tangible development and opportunities to participating countries through promoting infrastructure construction, trade, investment, and cultural exchanges. In terms of infrastructure construction cooperation, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flagship project of the BRI. By building roads, railways, energy pipelines, and fiber-optic networks, it has facilitated economic development in Pakistan. This project not only enhances Pakistan's logistics efficiency and promotes local employment but also helps connect South Asia and Central Asia, strengthening economic cooperation and exchanges in the region. In terms of trade facilitation, the China-Europe Railway Express, as an important part of the BRI, significantly shortens transportation time and reduces logistics costs by increasing direct freight trains between China and Europe, providing more convenient trade channels for countries along the route and promoting trade between China and Europe. In terms of investment cooperation, China's investment projects in Southeast Asian countries such as Laos and Cambodia, including hydropower stations, industrial parks, and agricultural cooperation projects, not only bring funds and technology to the local area but also promote local economic development and employment, strengthening economic ties between China and Southeast Asian countries. In terms of environmental protection and sustainable development, cooperation between China and countries along the route in areas such as green energy and ecological conservation, such as solar and wind energy projects invested in Middle Eastern and African countries,

not only promotes the use of clean energy but also spreads and practices the concept of sustainable development globally.

In conclusion, the CSFM concept aims to address challenges through global cooperation, promote common development, and highlight China's role as a responsible major country and its contribution to the reform of the global governance system. The proposal and implementation of the BRI further underscore the importance of interdependence and win-win cooperation in international relations, demonstrating China's determination and efforts to promote global well-being and safeguard global peace and development.

4.2.2. Advocating the "Amity, Sincerity, Mutual Benefit, and Inclusiveness" Diplomatic Concept

In current international relations, China's proposed diplomatic concept of "Amity, Sincerity, Mutual Benefit, and Inclusiveness" has become the core of its neighboring policy, reflecting new thinking and strategies in China's foreign relations. This concept not only guides China's interactions with neighboring countries but also provides theoretical support for the BRI, aiming to construct a new framework for regional cooperation based on mutual respect and common development.

The term "Amity" reflects China's desire to establish close relationships with countries along the route, emphasizing the promotion of trust and friendship among neighboring countries with a sincere attitude and friendly policies. Within the framework of the BRI, China is committed to sharing development opportunities with countries along the route, aiming to create a more fair, just, and equal international political and economic order through increased exchanges and cooperation. This initiative offers better external development opportunities for countries along the route, especially developing countries, to ride on the train of China's economic growth. While benefiting the Chinese people through the BRI, it also brings well-being to countries and people along the route.

"Sincerity" represents China's sincerity and honesty in foreign policy, especially in political and economic cooperation. China insists on establishing relations with countries along the route based on fairness and justice, adhering to international law and the basic principles of international relations, and opposing any form of hegemonism and power politics. China is committed to establishing a cooperation model based on honesty and mutual benefit, particularly in economic cooperation, ensuring that aid and cooperation projects are not subject to any political conditions, thereby helping countries along the route achieve independent, diverse, and sustainable development.

"Benefit" reflects the principle of mutual benefit and reciprocity upheld by China in the BRI. China's rapid development has made it the world's second-largest economy, with significant foreign investment and imports of goods. According to data from the Asian Development Bank, as of 2020, the investment demand for infrastructure in Asian countries will reach \$8 trillion, while the bank's outstanding loan amount is only \$53 billion. Compared to the vast funding needs in Asia, this amount seems negligible [7]. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China not only expands its economic influence but also provides significant development opportunities for countries along the route. Through infrastructure investment, China helps these countries improve conditions in transportation, energy, and communication, promoting regional economic integration and driving economic and social development in countries along the route.

"Inclusiveness" embodies China's respect for diverse cultures and an open attitude towards building the BRI. China recognizes the significant differences among countries along the route in terms of political systems, economic development levels, culture, and religion. Therefore, in promoting the BRI, China emphasizes harmony and inclusiveness, respecting the development paths and model choices of each country. Through promoting dialogue and exchanges between different civilizations, China aims to find common ground, narrow differences, and promote peaceful

coexistence and common prosperity in the region. This strategy not only contributes to maintaining regional stability but also provides new ideas and models for global governance.

4.3. Cultural Fusion and Inter-Civilizational Exchange

In a significant speech at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on March 27, 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping first proposed the viewpoint that civilizations become colorful through exchanges and enriched through mutual learning, stating that the exchange and mutual learning of civilizations are important forces driving the progress of human civilization and the development of world peace [8]. On July 3, 2023, Xi Jinping, in his congratulatory message to the Third Dialogue on Civilization Exchange and Mutual Learning and the First World Sinologists Conference, pointed out that throughout the course of human history, various ethnic groups have created civilizations with distinctive characteristics and symbols. Equal exchange and mutual learning among different civilizations will provide strong spiritual support for solving contemporary issues and achieving common development for humanity. Xi Jinping also emphasized that China is willing to work with all parties to advocate for the common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom for all humanity, implement a global civilization initiative, transcend barriers through the exchange of civilizations, overcome conflicts through mutual learning, and promote progress in human civilization together [9].

The BRI, as an important platform for China's opening up and international cooperation, has not only achieved remarkable results in the economic and trade fields but also played an important role in promoting cultural exchanges and mutual learning. Through this initiative, cultural ties between China and countries along the routes have become increasingly close, laying a solid foundation for promoting the CSFM concept.

In the field of education, China has established Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms, providing platforms for teaching Chinese language and disseminating Chinese culture to countries along the routes, thus promoting cultural exchanges and mutual understanding among the people of China and countries along the routes. In the field of arts, through the BRI, frequent artistic exchange activities between China and countries along the routes have been held, providing platforms for various international art festivals and exhibitions for artists to showcase their works, promoting inspiration exchange in artistic creation and mutual learning of artistic styles. In the field of sports, China and countries along the routes have strengthened sports exchanges and cooperation through friendly sports events and exchange of training experiences, while also promoting Chinese sports culture and spirit. More broadly, cultural exchanges also include folk exchanges, tourism cooperation, media cooperation, and other aspects.

In conclusion, through the BRI, cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and countries along the routes in various fields such as education, arts, and sports have continued to deepen. This has not only enhanced mutual understanding and friendly sentiments among the people but also provided a broad platform for mutual learning and integration among different cultures. It contributes to the construction of a harmonious and symbiotic global cultural ecosystem, thus providing significant cultural strength for promoting the CSFM concept.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper delves into the impact of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the BRI on the international community from both strategic and cultural perspectives. Strategically, China has strengthened its strategic partnerships with various countries through cooperation agreements, forming a global network of collaboration. This strategy aims to promote the upgrading of the global industrial chain and jointly address global challenges. Culturally, China advocates for

cultural exchanges and mutual learning through the BRI, promoting dialogue and cooperation among different cultures. This cultural perspective emphasizes respect for diversity, equality, and mutual benefit, advocating the CSFM concept. Traditional Chinese cultural values are upheld in this process, injecting more inclusiveness and sustainability into global governance.

It is evident that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is not only China's dream but also has far-reaching implications for the global landscape and international cooperation models. Through the BRI, China has demonstrated its role as a global economic participant and advocate for international cooperation while actively responding to potential challenges posed by geopolitical competition and the Thucydides Trap. This study provides an in-depth and comprehensive perspective on the evolving role of China in global cognition, with significant reference value for understanding the international significance of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and its contribution to the global governance system.

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