



EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION: THE INNOVATIVE APPROACH OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA'S PARTY DIPLOMACY IN THE NEW ERA

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Abstract

The world today is undergoing profound transformations unseen in a century. Globalization faces headwinds, manifesting in a global order plagued by disorder, dysfunction, and normlessness, which urgently demands renewed momentum to reform and recalibrate the global governance system. Concurrently, China is rising rapidly through the lens of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, emerging as a pivotal force reshaping the international landscape. In driving reforms to global governance, the party diplomacy of the Communist Party of China (CPC)—the core and soul of China's overall diplomacy—has assumed an increasingly prominent role. This paper constructs an analytical framework rooted in “unity of knowledge and action” (知行合一), a traditional Chinese philosophical tenet, to examine the status and role of party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in China's overall diplomacy in the new era, based on the perspective of extensive consultation in its new approach to global governance. The study seeks to unravel the inherent autonomy, logical coherence, and profound historical-cultural foundations underpinning China's distinctive party diplomacy approach.

Keywords: Party Diplomacy, Overall Diplomacy, Extensive Consultation, CPC Studies, Unity of Knowledge and Action

Introduction

China's new approach to global governance identifies extensive consultation as one of its fundamental principles. At its core, this principle seeks to forge a new type of international relations, addressing how major powers should engage with one another: through confrontation, competition, or collaborative deliberation? Or perhaps through healthy competition? Building on this, China aspires to construct a new global system. The question then arises: what forms of action or coordination can advance this approach? (Duan & Su, 2019).

To this end, China has proposed extensive consultation as a methodology for global governance. This approach carries distinct Chinese characteristics, rooted in the nation's historical pursuit of the ideal of "Great Unity under Heaven" (tianxia datong). Since ancient times, Chinese philosophy has emphasized values such as "the Dao of Great Harmony, where the world belongs to all" (da dao zhi xing, tianxia wei gong), "benevolence toward neighbors and harmony among nations" (qin ren shan lin, xie he wan bang), "solidarity and mutual assistance" (he zhong gong ji, shou wang xiang zhu) as paths to global peace, and "one world with a shared future" (tianxia yi jia, ming yun yu gong) as a vision for equitable and rational relations. These principles have evolved into a framework of equality, where dialogue emerges as the most common form of international engagement. (Leroux, 1988)

Dialogue, as a mode of action in international relations, serves to deepen mutual understanding, prevent interactions from spiraling into hyper-competitive trends, and create opportunities for consensus-building (Xi, 2021). While dialogue is fundamentally a communicative practice, it can also evolve into a mechanism for defining and advancing diverse developmental pathways. Political parties play pivotal roles in national governance and are vital in advancing human civilization. Inter-party dialogue and exchanges thus hold heightened significance. By proposing a new model of inter-party relations, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has contributed a cutting-edge intellectual framework to the global discourse on reforming governance. (Xi, 2013)

In this context, extensive consultation stands out as a proactive approach with the potential to foster consensus. The act of consultation merits analysis as a diplomatic tool for addressing the question of "how decisions are derived" in party-to-party engagements.

Objectives

Against a world undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, this paper establishes an analytical framework grounded in Chinese logic. From extensive consultation, a new approach for global governance is conducted, which conducts a comprehensive examination of the position and role of party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era within China's overall diplomacy. The study attempts to expand upon Western academic concepts and discursive frameworks to some extent, striving to unveil the inherent autonomy, logical coherence, and profound historical-cultural foundations underlying the party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.

Literature Reviews

Classical Chinese Political Thought

Classical Chinese political thought, particularly influenced by Confucianism, emphasizes the values of equality, justice, and moral governance. The concept of extensive consultation was evident in ancient China's emphasis on listening to the voices of the people. Rulers were expected to govern not only through power but through virtue and benevolence (Qin, 2003). This included considering the opinions of advisors and the public to maintain harmony in society. The idea that "the people are the foundation of the nation" reflects a political culture where consultation and collective wisdom played a key role in achieving just and effective governance. (Zhu & Wang, 2019)

The Significance of Inter-Party Extensive Consultation

"Extensive Consultation" (共商) is the foundation of China's diplomatic principles of "Joint Contribution" and "Shared Benefits." Recognizing political diversity, China promotes dialogue among global political parties to enhance mutual understanding and tackle shared challenges. (Liu, 2021) Through forums, high-level exchanges, and training programs, the Communist Party of China (CPC) encourages experience-sharing without imposing its model (He & Xing, 2009). This fosters inclusive governance, strengthens diplomatic ties, and contributes to global stability. Extensive consultation helps build political consensus on global issues like peace, climate change, and development, while reducing ideological conflicts. It also elevates the role of political parties in international relations, complementing traditional diplomacy and advancing China's vision of a shared future based on cooperation and respect (Hu, 2012).

Consultation via Platforms: China's Propositions in the Role of the United Nations

China views the United Nations (UN) as a central platform for global governance and advocates for rule-based, multilateral cooperation grounded in the UN Charter. As a major contributor and permanent Security Council member, China emphasizes alignment between its words and actions, reinforcing its credibility on global issues (Mahbubani & Sng, 2017)

1. International Security Governance

China supports the UN as a platform for dialogue and coordination on security. It promotes principles of equality among nations and the need for shared security through inclusive consultation, calling for the UN to play a greater role in preserving peace and global order (Xi, 2017).

2. Global Economic Governance

China supports a fair multilateral trading system centered on the WTO and calls for reform of global financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank to better represent emerging markets. It promotes aligning commitments with actions, encouraging practical cooperation for sustainable economic development (Xi, 2019)

3. Other Fields

China backs the UN in climate action (e.g., Paris Agreement), education and cultural exchange (via UNESCO), gender equality, and sustainable development. It calls for mobilizing global resources to address challenges through inclusive and equitable governance (Souriya, 2021).

4. Strengthening the UN's Role through Action

China demonstrates its support by launching initiatives like the "Six 100s," establishing development funds, offering training, and enhancing data collection in developing countries. These efforts showcase China's active role in global public goods provision and advancing the UN 2030 Agenda. (Sun, 1982; Hobbes, Hobbes, 1985).

Methodology

In terms of research methodology, this study primarily employs historical analysis, literature review, and case study methods. By situating the Communist Party of China's party diplomacy within the historical context of the new era and examining its position and role in China's overall diplomacy framework, this approach facilitates the identification of its developmental patterns and internal logic. The case study method is specifically utilized to fully demonstrate the profound foundation of party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in guiding China's participation in global governance. This is achieved through an "extensive consultation-based perspective" that highlights the theoretical and practical innovations of the Communist Party of China in global governance engagement. Examples include the Party's new practices in advancing state participation through party diplomacy across various domains of global and regional governance, such as within the United Nations framework and Southeast Asian affairs.

Results and Discussion

Results

The study reveals that party diplomacy occupies the core and soul of China's overall foreign policy, akin to the "brain" of China's diplomatic architecture. Other diplomatic channels, such as governmental diplomacy, people-to-people diplomacy, and multilateral diplomacy, operate under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), serving as externalized expressions of the Party's will and functioning as the "trunk" and "limbs" of China's diplomatic body. By grasping the "brain" of party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, we can effectively drive the "trunk" and "limbs" of China's overall diplomacy, enabling agile and purposeful engagement on the international stage to advance global governance reforms and foster a community with a shared future for humanity.

The analytical framework, grounded in Chinese logic, further elucidates the inherent logic through which party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics guides China's overall participation in global governance. Utilizing the "Knowledge-Action-Integration" framework, the study comprehensively demonstrates the extensive practices and explorations of Chinese-style party diplomacy in steering global governance initiatives. It profoundly interprets the internal logic of transitioning from conceptual understanding to practical implementation, ultimately achieving the highest governance ideal of "unity between knowledge and action." This framework not only highlights the theoretical depth of China's diplomatic philosophy but also validates its operational efficacy in reshaping global governance paradigms through culturally rooted, self-determined intellectual systems. As a core element of the new global governance philosophy, extensive consultation exemplifies the CPC commitment to advancing governance practices. It has substantially enriched China's discourse on global governance, with tangible outcomes validating its efficacy.

Discussion

The paper begins by elaborating on the intellectual origins of the "extensive consultation" concept, tracing its roots to classical Chinese political philosophy, the historical logic of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and the global demand for China's consultative approach. Subsequently, it examines the CPC's concrete practices in implementing consultation mechanisms, where the empathy-building methodology of party diplomacy proves particularly vital in securing international political parties' comprehension and participation in consultative processes. (Liu & Lü, 2018; Xi, 2018)

Case studies in UN governance and Southeast Asian regional cooperation demonstrate how CPC-led consultative propositions and practices have successfully improved external environments through multilateral dialogue. The study then employs the principle of "integration" (合一) to synergize the CPC's consultative concepts and actions, establishing a "shared conceptual framework" for identity construction, boundary demarcation, and global governance prospects within consultation mechanisms (Marx & Engels, 2002; State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2011).

As the cornerstone of the new global governance paradigm, consultation serves as a crucial operational method for the CPC to enhance governance concepts. This approach has enriched the discourse of CPC's party diplomacy in global governance, with practical outcomes validating its efficacy. The consultative discourse creates a deliberative space for Chinese-style party diplomacy to advance global governance, prioritizing equality and justice as value benchmarks. By advocating this shared conceptual framework, the CPC promotes the construction of a comprehensive communicative arena that bridges ideological divides while maintaining principled boundaries (Tod, 2014; Yu, 2021).

New knowledge

This study will construct a "Knowledge-Action-Integration" analytical framework rooted in traditional Chinese philosophical concepts, incorporating the principle of "consultation" into the discourse on the Communist Party of China's (CPC) party diplomacy. Through this framework, the paper interprets the expansion and transcendence of the CPC's party diplomacy in the new era from a consultative perspective, elucidating its role and significance within China's overarching foreign policy architecture. It further analyzes how the new global governance vision, under contemporary circumstances, guides the CPC's participation in global governance, facilitates reforms in the global governance system, and thereby advances the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

The paper seeks to transcend Western academic concepts and discursive frameworks to some extent, striving to articulate China's international relations theories and foreign policies through Chinese logic and discourse. This effort aims to progress toward establishing an autonomous knowledge system for party diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. By grounding its analysis in China's intellectual traditions and practical innovations, the study endeavors to provide an academic expression that harmonizes philosophical depth, policy relevance, and cultural distinctiveness, ultimately contributing to the global discourse on governance with Chinese theoretical perspectives.

Recommendations

1. Develop Analytical Frameworks Rooted in Chinese Philosophical Traditions

Emphasize the importance of constructing analytical models, such as the "Knowledge-Action-Integration" framework, that draw from traditional Chinese philosophy. This approach provides a culturally grounded lens to better understand China's party diplomacy and global governance strategies.

2. Incorporate the Principle of Consultation in Diplomatic Practices

Highlight the role of "consultation" as a core principle guiding the Communist Party of China's (CPC) diplomatic engagements, promoting collaborative decision-making and multilateral dialogue in international relations.

3. Promote Indigenous Theoretical Frameworks in International Relations

Encourage efforts to move beyond Western-centric academic paradigms by articulating China's foreign policy and international relations through Chinese logic and discourse, thereby contributing to a distinctive and autonomous knowledge system for party diplomacy.

4. Align Party Diplomacy with China's Broader Foreign Policy Goals

Stress the need to integrate party diplomacy into the broader architecture of China's foreign policy, especially in advancing reforms of the global governance system and fostering a community with a shared future for humanity.

5. Balance Philosophical Depth with Practical Relevance

Advocate for scholarly work that harmonizes deep intellectual traditions with contemporary policy needs, ensuring that China's international strategies are both theoretically sound and pragmatically effective.

6. Contribute to Global Governance Discourse with Chinese Perspectives

Support the inclusion of Chinese theoretical insights in global governance debates to diversify and enrich international discussions, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation.

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