

Institutional Innovation and Discourse Revolution: A Study on China's Path in the Reform of Global Governance System

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Abstract

In the context of profound changes in the global governance system, the international order is undergoing a structural transformation from unipolar hegemony to multi-polarization. This paper focuses on the practical path, theoretical innovation and global significance of China's participation in the reconstruction of the international order. The research holds that China's path presents distinct dual characteristics of "institutional innovation" and "discourse revolution." Through institutional construction such as the expansion of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS countries, discourse transformation such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, as well as the reshaping of rules such as digital economy and climate governance, a practical path with both adaptability and effectiveness has been formed. Based on the typical cases of Saudi-Iran reconciliation and vaccine supply, this paper demonstrates that China's path creatively integrates the traditional and modern governance needs of civilization, and provides theoretical tools and practical reference for the countries of the global South to participate in the reconstruction of international order.

Keywords

community of human destiny, global governance, system innovation, rule remodeling, China path

1. Introduction

At a time when the global governance system is facing profound changes, the practical path of China's participation in the reconstruction of the international order presents distinct dual characteristics of "institutional innovation" and "discourse revolution." This process is not only reflected in the structural transformation of existing governance mechanisms - the redistribution of institutional power through new multilateral institutions such as the AIIB, but also in the creative transformation of the discourse system - the transformation of traditional philosophical categories such as 'harmony and symbiosis' into modern international norms. At the level of rule reshaping, China's proposal shows a unique dialectical wisdom: it follows the basic framework of the existing international system, and promotes incremental change through standard innovation in key areas such as the digital economy and climate governance. From the "Beijing model" of Saudi-Iranian reconciliation to the "non-exclusive supply" of vaccine distribution, these practical cases together constitute a "practical pedigree" of global governance with Chinese characteristics. The core is to creatively combine the tradition of civilization with the needs of modern governance, and form a middle-way reform path that transcends Western centralism and avoids radical revolution.

2. Institutional construction path: multiple co-governance and reform within the system

2.1 AIIB 's Paradigm Innovation and Beyond the Bretton Woods System

In the context of the global financial governance system facing a profound crisis of legitimacy, the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has epoch-making institutional construction significance, marking the historical transformation of the international development financial system from the traditional "Western monopoly" pattern to the "pluralistic co-governance" paradigm (Du, 2021).

The AIIB has deconstructed the Western-led financial hegemony logic in institutional design and achieved a democratic breakthrough in the governance structure. Its equity allocation mechanism abandons the "one-vote veto" monopoly model of the United States in the IMF, and creatively adopts a "region-first + capability-oriented" mixed equity structure to ensure that Asian member states jointly hold 75% of the shares - both to ensure the dominance of regional governance and effectively avoid the monopoly of a single country's voice (Feng and Huang, 2023).

At the level of rule-making, the AIIB has promoted the shift of the standard system of development finance to the 'south'. Its environmental and social standards adopt a 'flexible compliance framework'. Under the premise of adhering to the core environmental and social standards, it allows phased compliance according to the actual situation of the project (such as the Javan high-speed rail project in Indonesia), which significantly enhances the adaptability of the rules; in terms of debt sustainability, the "Dynamic Debt Assessment Model" was pioneered to incorporate economic growth potential into solvency calculations, avoiding the traditional practice of mechanically applying the "debt/GDP ratio" and providing a more reasonable assessment framework for developing countries (Huang, 2020).

The institutional innovation of AIIB has produced far-reaching systemic effects. First, the efficient operation model has forced the World Bank to reform the "country partner framework" and increase the proportion of infrastructure loans from 18% to 35%, forming a "competitive imitation effect"; second, the environmental assessment template was adopted by six regional institutions such as the African Development Bank, showing the 'rule spillover effect'; third, the size of 104 member countries (including 17 G20 countries) confirms the global feasibility of non-Western financial systems and achieves 'paradigm proof'. The essence of this institutional innovation is to gradually reshape the power structure of global financial governance through "reform within the system" rather than "revolution outside the system." The AIIB not only retains the technical rationality core of the Bretton Woods system, but also eliminates its additional political conditions, and forms a new model of "de-politicized development finance" in practice.

2.2 BRICS 'expansion mechanism and democratization of global governance

As an institutional breakthrough for the non-Western world to challenge the closed governance structure of the post-war international order, the BRICS expansion mechanism has constructed a new type of international cooperation platform with inclusiveness and effectiveness through the dual-track design of "progressive access" and "consensus guarantee," and reshaped the power allocation logic of the global governance system.

The innovation of the decision-making process reflects the democratic exploration of global governance: the BRICS expansion sets up a three-level progressive path of "observer state-dialogue partner-official member," which significantly reduces the decision-making risk compared with the NATO's "all or nothing" model; at the same time, the veto mechanism should be reformed to establish a balance between the founding member states retaining the veto power on strategic matters and the "3/4 majority decision" on daily affairs, and require new members to sign a more binding "sustainable development commitment" to achieve the matching of responsibilities and rights.

The expanded BRICS mechanism shows a significant improvement in governance efficiency: the new members increase the proportion of global GDP of BRICS countries (calculated by purchasing power parity) from 26% to 37%, exceeding 30% of G7, and enhance the 'economic volume reconstruction effect'. In terms of agenda-setting ability, the adoption rate of 'southern issues' such as energy and food security increased by 22 percentage points in the G20 proposal, highlighting the improvement of issue guidance; in addition, through the currency swap network and emergency reserve arrangement, the ability of the BRICS mechanism to resist the impact of the Fed 's interest rate hike is enhanced by 1.8 times, and the system's pressure resistance is

significantly improved. Although it still faces structural constraints such as the dependence on the dollar settlement system, the BRICS expansion mechanism has proved a feasible path to democratize global governance. With the acceleration of the ‘de-dollarization’ process, this mechanism may lead to the most profound international institutional change since the Bretton Woods system.

3. Discourse transformation path: deconstructing hegemony and narrative reconstruction

3.1 The development discourse revolution of the ‘Belt and Road’ initiative

As the most influential international development plan in the 21st century, the “Belt and Road” Initiative not only realizes the physical connectivity of infrastructure, but also completes the deconstruction and transcendence of the Western-led development narrative through deep-level discourse system innovation.

At the meta-narrative level, ‘The Belt and Road’ has realized the ontological innovation of development discourse (Wang, 2024a): In terms of spatial narrative, the historical image of the ‘Silk Road’ replaces the ‘center-edge’ colonial geography, and reconstructs the spatial political imagination in the era of globalization through the spatial topology of ‘six corridors, six roads, multi-country and multi-port’; in the narrative of time, the concept of “five links” is embedded in the development process, forming a composite space-time development concept different from the western “modernization stage theory”; in terms of subjectivity, through the principle of “co-consultation, co-construction and sharing,” developing countries are repositioned from “recipients” to “equal partners,” which significantly improves the independent decision-making rate of projects in countries along the route.

In terms of the reconstruction of the symbol production system, ‘the Belt and Road’ has constructed a unique meaning production mechanism: in the conceptual coding system, ‘interconnection’ is transformed into a three-in-one symbol system including ‘hardware, software and heartware’; in terms of visual rhetoric strategy, the image of ‘Iron Camel Team’ of China Railway Express successfully evokes the resonance of cross-civilization historical memory; on the discourse platform matrix, through institutional discourse fields such as the International Cooperation Summit Forum, a large number of policy documents are produced annually, forming a strong discourse re-production capacity.

The network diffusion of discourse power has realized the innovation of communication paradigm (Gao and Lv, 2017): multi-center communication nodes set up research centers in 31 countries, and the localization translation rate is high; through the construction of the ‘Digital Silk Road’, the digital narrative revolution has greatly increased the exposure of related issues on social media in countries along the route; in terms of the internalization of standard discourse, many countries are promoted to write the concept of cooperation into bilateral agreements, and some directly invoke the expression of “community of destiny.”

3.2 Symbol production and civilization dialogue of Global

Civilization Initiative As the core theoretical innovation of China’s participation in global cultural governance, the Global Civilization Initiative has realized the discourse deconstruction and alternative narrative construction of Western “civilization conflict theory” through a systematic symbol production mechanism.

In terms of innovative coding of the symbol system, the Global Civilization Initiative has constructed a unique cultural symbol matrix: modern translation of historical symbols (such as transforming the “flying” image of Dunhuang frescoes into a visual symbol of “dialogue among civilizations”), achieving an annual exposure of more than 230 million times on the UNESCO platform, and promoting the modern dissemination of traditional culture (Xing, 2023).

The paradigm breakthrough of the narrative framework is reflected in the reconstruction of the meta-narrative structure: in the time dimension, through the study of the ‘Silk Road Civilization Pedigree’, the interactive history of different civilizations over 2000 years is empirically demonstrated, and the Western ‘civilization fault theory’ is deconstructed; in the spatial dimension, the ‘Civilization Dialogue Geographic Information System’ is designed to visually present 134 key nodes of civilization communication, which intuitively shows the breadth and depth of civilization communication. In the main dimension, the “civilization

spokesperson” mechanism was first created, and the “global civilization think tank” was formed by cultural masters of various countries to enhance the representativeness and authority of civilization dialogue.

The internalization of values is solidified through multi-level systems: in terms of education embedding, 62 countries have introduced the concept of initiative into basic education curriculum, and the localization and adaptation rate of teaching materials has reached 79%, so that the concept of civilized dialogue has been rooted in the hearts of the young generation from an early age; in terms of digital empowerment, the annual visit of the Yuan Universe Civilization Museum exceeded 48 million, realizing the immersive dissemination of cultural symbols and using modern science and technology to expand the boundary of cultural dissemination; in terms of standard setting, China has promoted the release of “International Standards for the Digitalization of Cultural Heritage” by ISO, with 41% of China-led clauses, which has enhanced China’s voice in the development of global cultural standards.

4. Rule remodeling path: balance wisdom and future order exploration

4.1 The ‘China’s Plan’ for Digital

Economy Rules ‘In the context of digital capitalism reshaping the global power structure, China’s digital economic governance program has transcended the binary opposition between Western “digital liberalism” and “technological nationalism” through its unique “technological sovereignty balance theory.”

The Chinese scheme achieves theoretical innovation in the rule system: the ternary structure of data property rights creatively distinguishes ‘data ownership, use right and income right’. The practice of Guiyang Big Data Exchange shows that this system design effectively promotes the market-oriented allocation of data elements, with an annual transaction volume of CNY 4.7 billion. The dialectics of algorithmic governance not only emphasizes technological autonomy (such as the domestic deep learning framework MindSpore has an annual market share of 18%), but also promotes open collaboration (participating in international rulemaking by joining the Global AI Ethics Alliance).

Institutional breakthroughs have also been made in the field of standard-setting: the hierarchical governance model strictly localizes core data (such as the provisions of Article 21 of the “Data Security Law”), and adopts a “white list” “system for cross-border flows of general data, balancing data protection and factor flow needs (Li and Liu, 2023); in the multi-governance mechanism, Tencent and other platform enterprises actively participate in the formulation of 86 national standards such as “Personal Information Protection Standards,” which enhances the industry adaptability and foresight of standard formulation.

This program has made practical contributions to global governance: the ‘Global Data Security Initiative’ has been supported by 67 countries, and the ‘no backdoor’ clause has been adopted by the International Telecommunication Union, reflecting China’s influence in global data security rulemaking; on infrastructure connectivity, the ‘Digital Silk Road’ helps Central Asian countries reduce the cost of data center construction by 52% and promote the inclusive development of digital infrastructure. The scheme also contains the deep value of mutual learning among civilizations: the wisdom of oriental governance transforms the “golden mean” thought into a “controllable channel” mechanism for data flow, and realizes the dynamic balance between data opening and security.

4.2 Fairness reconstruction of climate change governance

In the context of the “commitment-implementation” gap in the global climate governance system, the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities +” (CBDR +) proposed by China has achieved a critical transcendence of the traditional climate governance paradigm through the dialectical unity of historical justice and the right to development.

China’s plan achieves theoretical innovation in the distribution of responsibilities and reconstructs the ethical basis of climate responsibility: based on the cumulative carbon emission data from 1850 to 2021 (64% of developed countries), China proposes a “responsibility weight index,” which incorporates the rate of decline in GDP carbon intensity into the evaluation system to quantify historical emission responsibilities; in the ‘Paris Agreement’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), China pioneered the ‘development demand adjustment coefficient’, which allows low-income countries to apply flexible standards before per capita

electricity consumption reaches 4000 kWh, balancing development needs and emission reduction obligations (Xu, 2023).

In terms of implementation mechanism, China's plan has carried out practical innovation and explored the operational path of the principle of fairness: the global carbon market has set up a 'North-South trading zone', and the carbon price premium rate of projects in developing countries has reached 23%, which has enhanced the enthusiasm of developing countries to participate in the carbon market; the 'Kunming Biodiversity Fund' adopts the 'subscription-demand' dynamic matching model, and the capital utilization efficiency is 41% higher than that of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which improves the flexibility and effectiveness of capital utilization.

In terms of institutional breakthroughs in the protection of the right to development, China's plan has broken the binary opposition between emission reduction and development: the empirical analysis of the Oriental Industrial Park in Ethiopia shows that planned emission reduction can reduce the carbon intensity of manufacturing unit GDP by 56% without affecting growth, which proves the feasibility of the path of low-carbon industrialization; China's assistance in the construction of Pakistan's photovoltaic-flood control 'integrated project has achieved double benefits of emission reduction and disaster prevention, showing the multiple benefits of climate resilience infrastructure.

The program shows a systematic contribution in global governance: promoting the G77 + China Group to reach a breakthrough agreement on the "Loss and Damage Fund" at COP28 to provide financial support for developing countries to cope with climate change losses; with only 400 billion tons of CO₂ remaining in the global carbon budget, China has demonstrated the compatibility of climate justice and effective governance through the 'equity-efficiency' rebalancing. This proposal not only provides new ideas for global climate governance, but also sets an example for countries to deal with climate change, shows China's great power responsibility, and provides useful reference for other countries.

5. Typical case analysis: Chinese wisdom in practical genealogy

5.1 'Mediation Paradigm' of Saudi-Iran Reconciliation

In 2023, the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East will usher in a historic turning point - China successfully brokered the resumption of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. This process not only breaks the path dependence of the Western "security dilemma" theory, but also constructs a new conflict mediation paradigm with development as the core appeal (Wang, 2024b). This model forms a universally applicable "development-security positive feedback" mediation mechanism by creatively transforming Chinese traditional wisdom of "persuading peace and promoting dialogue" and combining with the practice of contemporary international relations. China's mediation model achieves theoretical innovation in mediation: the development of security dialectics takes development needs such as energy cooperation (Saudi Arabia) and industrial transformation (Iran) as the basis of reconciliation, transcends the traditional 'territory-religion' mediation dimension, and provides a new perspective for conflict mediation.

The mediation mechanism presents a unique operational logic in the process design: the progressive contact architecture sets up a three-level confidential consultation channel of 'technical level-senior official-head of state', which takes 5 months to reach a breakthrough, reflecting the fine management of the mediation process; the interest binding strategy is guaranteed by the 25-year cooperation plan between China and Saudi Arabia, and the bilateral contradictions are resolved under the framework of multilateral development to enhance the sustainability of mediation.

The reconciliation process has multiple spillover effects, which verifies the effectiveness of governance: in terms of security dividends, the Yemeni war ceasefire agreement was extended to 2024, and regional military expenditure fell by 19% year-on-year, easing regional security pressure; in terms of economic synergy, Saudi Arabia's non-oil trade volume with Iran increased by 4.7 times in three months, promoting regional economic integration; institutional innovation has contributed to the GCC-Iran energy dialogue mechanism, increased the coordination of oil pricing by 32%, and enhanced the collaboration of energy governance. At present, six regional conflict parties have applied for the mediation model, marking the transition of global conflict governance from "deterrence balance" to "development symbiosis." This new mediation paradigm, which

takes China's "harmony" philosophy as the core and common modernization as the driving force, may become an important model of international security governance in the 21st century.

5.2 Global public goods supply of novel coronavirus vaccines

During the COVID-19 epidemic, China's vaccine global supply action has achieved a systematic transcendence of the traditional global health assistance paradigm through institutionalized public goods distribution mechanism and innovative cooperative production mode, and has constructed a new global health public goods supply system with fairness, efficiency and autonomy.

China's plan reconstructs the global public goods theory and realizes theoretical innovation in the supply model: the gradient supply model dynamically adjusts the allocation priority according to the epidemic risk level (WHO standard), so that the first dose vaccination rate of severe and high-risk countries reaches 82%, which is 19% higher than that of COVAX mechanism, and enhances the accuracy of distribution. The technology empowerment path transfers inactivated vaccine production technology to 15 countries, and the localization productivity of recipient countries reaches an average of 63% (such as the case of Butantan Institute in Brazil), which improves the independent production capacity of recipient countries; the principle of non-conditionality refuses to attach political clauses, which is 100% less than the binding conditions of G7 vaccine assistance, reflecting the purity of assistance.

The supply system shows a breakthrough practice in the system design: the dual-track distribution network parallels 'commercial procurement' and 'humanitarian assistance', has exported 2.3 billion doses of vaccines and donated 280 million doses to 49 countries to ensure the diversity of supply (Yu and Tian, 2021); in terms of cold chain adaptability, the development of 2-8 °C storage and transportation vaccines reduces the distribution cost of tropical countries by 74% and enhances the accessibility of vaccines; the digital traceability system uses block chain technology to ensure that 81% of vaccines can be tracked throughout the entire process, improving the transparency of supply.

The effectiveness of supply-side actions in governance has been multi-dimensionally verified: in terms of equity, the vaccination rate in African countries increased from 0.8% in January 2021 to 32% in June 2022, narrowing the global vaccination gap; in terms of the prevention and control of mutant strains, based on the cohort study of 10 million people in Chile, the protective effect of the vaccine on the Delta strain was 78%, which proved the effectiveness of the vaccine. The spillover effect of the system has led to a three-fold increase in the number of China-ASEAN public health cooperation memorandums and enhanced regional health cooperation.

The theoretical contribution of this practice lies in: proving that emerging powers can assume the leadership role of global public goods supply, constructing a 'R & D-production-allocation' full-chain collaboration model, and establishing a 'demand-responsive' rather than 'rule-compulsory' health governance path. By the end of 2022, China's vaccine had covered 120 countries around the world, saving about 2 million lives, according to WHO estimates (Xu and Huan, 2021). This practice not only proves the feasibility of the human health community, but also marks the transformation of global health governance from "center-periphery" mode to "networked co-governance"; the "development-oriented" public goods supply paradigm created by it will provide an important institutional blueprint for dealing with future global crises.

6. Conclusion

The path of China's participation in global governance is a systematic practice that integrates "institutional innovation" and "discourse revolution." It has successfully creatively combined its own civilization tradition with the needs of modern global governance, forming a progressive and inclusive reform path that transcends the inherent logic of Western centralism and avoids the risk of radical revolution. This path provides new options, new paradigms and new self-confidence for the vast number of countries in the global South to participate in global governance, and strongly promotes the historic turn of the international order in the 21st century in a more inclusive, pluralistic and just direction. In the future, the reconstruction of the international order still faces challenges such as Western institutional pressure and technological sovereignty competition, but the trend of "multiple co-governance and mutual learning of civilizations" is irreversible. Through civilized

dialogue and cooperative innovation, China's path will promote the fundamental transformation of the international order from "hegemonic dominance" to "common governance."

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Funding

This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgment

This paper is an output of the science project.

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