A cultural discourse studies approach to communication

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Abstract

Just as the old problems of the world, such as poverty, climate change and nuclear weapon rivalry, are being exacerbated by the new virus of COVID-19, humanity has not chosen solidarity and cooperation. The human science of Communication Studies does not seem to be concerned, or equipped, to help with the existential crises, either. In this article I introduce as alternative Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS), an emerging culturalist paradigm of communication research, in terms of its conception, direction, operation as well as production. It is characterized by engagement with culturally diversified and competing discourses with a view to combating cultural hegemony on the one hand and enhancing cultural harmony on the other. To illustrate this culturally conscious and critical programme, a case study of Chinese defense policy discourse is presented.

Keywords

Culture, diversity, power, discourse system.

Introduction

The global village has never been so chaotic as today since the end of the Cold War. A few figures speak volumes. The 2018 World Bank report says that 'almost half the world's population – 3.4 billion people – still struggles to meet basic needs,'[2] while, according to Global Wealth Report 2021[3], the top percentile

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[2] Available from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/10/17/nearly-half-the-world-lives-on-less-than-550-a-day
[3] Credit Suisse Research Institute, research.institute@credit-suisse.com; credit-suisse.com/researchinstitute.

possesses half household assets of the world and nearly 2/3 of the household wealth are found in North America and Europe which account for 17% of the world's adult population. According to the World Health Organization, about 7 million people die of air pollution.[4] The Swedish Thinktank reports that as of the start of 2021 there stored on the earth are 13,080 nuclear warheads and the US and Russia account for over 90% of them.[5] As the old crises of poverty, climate change and nuclear weapon rivalry are being exacerbated by the new virus of COVID-19, the world has chosen anything but solidarity and cooperation. At the recent 76th UN meeting, the Secretary General Guterres summarized it well, 'Our world has never been more threatened. Or more divided. We face the greatest cascade of crises in our lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic has supersized glaring inequalities. The climate crisis is pummeling the planet. Upheaval from Afghanistan to Ethiopia to Yemen and beyond has thwarted peace. A surge of mistrust and misinformation is polarizing people and paralyzing societies. Human rights are under fire. Science is under assault. And economic lifelines for the most vulnerable are coming too little and too late – if they come at all. Solidarity is missing in action – just when we need it most.' But it may be reflected: Which of these contradictions does not have to do with culture deep down?

The mainstream scholarship of communication has not however seemed to be concerned, or equipped, to help with the existential perplexities. For example, a total of 1817 articles published between 2018 and 2020 in fourteen SSCI indexed international journals on communication were examined in terms of key words of poverty, climate/environment and nuclear (weapons), respectively.[6] Only 5 articles involve poverty,106 climate/environment, and 0 nuclear weapons. More broadly, as may be observed, mainstream communication research, when considered as a cultural discourse, universalizes Western bias and dominates the field and consequently the non-western world is stereotyped, devalued, marginalized or simply excluded (Asante, 2006; Gordeon, 2007; Ishii, 2004; McQuail, 2005; Miike, 2006; Shi-xu, 2009).

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[4] Available from: https://www.who.int/health-topics/air-pollution#tab=tab_1

[5] Available from: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/china-india-pakistan-expanding-nuclear-arsenal-says-swedish-think-tank/article34814508.ece

[6] They are: Communication Theory; Discourse & Society; Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly; Journal of Intercultural Communication; International Journal of Communication; Media Culture & Society; Western Journal of Communication; Human Communication Research; European Journal of Communication; Asian Journal of Communication; Communication Monographs; Critical Studies in Media Communication; Political Communication.

The present article is concerned, then, to delineate an alternative mode of communication research, Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS), in terms of its conception, assumptions and key notions therein, as well as the aims, tasks and norms for doing CDS. A distinguishing feature of this line of work is that it is culturally conscious and critical in that it takes seriously the cultural diversity and division of communication by combating cultural hegemony on the one hand and enhancing cultural harmony on the other. As part of this explication, a set of academic platforms will be shown as well that foster and facilitate its growth. Since CDS is an emerging paradigm, relatively young and evolving, an illustration of its use will be offered through an empirical case study of the Chinese national military strategy discourse.

Aculturalism in communication studies: An example

Above I alluded to the inadequacy and counter-productiveness of mainstream communication scholarship. Now let us examine in some detail an exemplar thereof before expounding CDS. A typical strand in the field, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), has excelled with its functional and ideological analysis of socio-political texts; it has demonstrated its ability and efficacy in making transparent indirect and hidden forms of repressive or prejudicial language (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2001a; Wodak, 2001). Its capacities and achievements notwithstanding, however, this lineage is constituted out of Western concepts, values, ways of thinking, analytic tools and topics of interest, as any cultural comparative perspective would reveal; by smoothing over its cultural idiosyncrasies, inadvertently or consciously, and by presenting human discourses as if they were universally organised, and, aided by corporate publishing and international marketing, it has become itself a global dominant ideological discourse itself. Consequently, the actual cultural diversity and divisiveness of human discourses are obscured, possible intercultural-intellectual dialogue and debate repressed, and scholarly heritages of the developing world left in decay (Alatas, 2006; Scheurich, 1993; Shi-xu, 2009).

It is true that CDA is internally varied to some extent in its conceptual and analytic tools and research objectives; Van Dijk (2001b) has called for disciplinary diversity; Wodak (2001: 2) suggests that CDA should be considered as but a 'shared perspective' on discourse analysis. But all variants, like much of mainstream discourse analysis (see Van Dijk 1997), share two interrelated and defining features, seen but often unnoticed, namely, (a) imbuing its system of research with Western way of thinking, concepts, values, interests, on the one side but on the other hand (b) universalising and globalizing its discourse,

through ignoring non-Western research and practice while marketing its own academic production across the world, despite its purported commitment to combating domination, prejudice and exclusion. Ultimately, it becomes a Westcentric discourse, over the Rest.

The concepts, theory, methods, research topics and questions that CDA (not only the master texts but also applications under its banner) presents and practices are Western by origin, tradition and perspectives. It may be called that here the text (whether written or spoken), i.e. the linguistic form, is the focus and end goal of analysis; context is used as given, a mere tool or clue for interpreting the former; the speaker's purpose, or textual function, is regarded as sole organizing principle for communication, regardless the reader/hearer('s response); observable data is the only valid form of evidence; linguistic features are defined or adjudicated often without taking into account broader context involved. Needless to say, if and when compared with other cultural styles of research tradition, it may become clear that such an approach may at best be partial, even misleading or irrelevant; from a Chinese perspective, for instance, which is profoundly wary of words and exhorts attention to deeds, text analysis is simply misplaced.

On the other hand, CDA routinely portrays itself as if it were culturally neutral, universal and standard, nevertheless, implicitly or explicitly. It presents concepts, theory, methods, topics, criteria, as a matter-of-course, regardless cultural differences and alternatives, real or potential, and apply them irrespective of local circumstances and concerns. In addition, the social and cultural background of the researcher is also removed from the picture. This is not just the case with master texts, but it is also emulated in their applications the world over. In fact, the cultural commandments, values and principles of the CDA are imposed on other cultural and diverse discourses, while at the same time marginalizing domestic science. One should realize that, aided by economic advantages, this academic discourse is reproduced and amplified through international teaching, meeting and of course multinational corporate publishing, marketing and distribution across the globe. In this way CDA becomes a monologic, exclusionary and hegemonic discourse, flowing uni-directionally from the Euro-American metropolitan centres to the rest of the world. Consequently, stereotypic knowledge and colonial power relations, especially over non-western Others, are consolidated (Said, 1978; 1993), possibilities of research innovation through intercultural dialogue and debate are repressed, and scholarly heritages of the non-western communities eroded (Shi-xu, 2005; 2009; 2012). Many a critic (e.g. Jones, 2007; Tyrwhitt-Drake,

1999; Widdowson, 1995) has raised similar issues: they have questioned the CDA's basis of its self-appointed ethical authority and intellectual certainty and drawn attention to such diverse aspects of the research process as the bias of the researcher, the complex and dynamic nature of the world's affairs, the inalienable interconnections of texts with the political, economic, historical, and cultural as well as a host of other contextual facets of the discourse under study.

Below I shall turn to present a culturalist approach to communication studies, Cultural Discourse Studies, that purports to intervene in the field and more widely to confront global plights by exercising a culturally conscious and critical way of understanding and resolving local and global issues emanating from cultural forms of communication.

A cultural turn

Alongside of and owing to the cultural blindness and Westcentrism of the mainstream tradition of Communication Studies (CS), there has been a cultural turn – developments of various cultural approaches (Collier, 2000; Gavriely-Nuri, 2012; Gordon, 2007; Ishii, 2004; McQuail, 2005; Miike, 2006; 2009; Pardo, 2010; Prah, 2010; Shi-xu, 2005; 2009). They form part of the background for CDS as they provide inspirations and frames of reference. It seems that these approaches can be best characterized as 'communication as culture-general,' represented by ethnography of communication and cultural discourse analysis, 'communication as culture-particular,' represented by Asiacentric & Afrocentric theories, 'communication as culture-incidental,' represented by intercultural communication theory.

The first, culture-general approach assumes that culture exists across human communication such that it is possible to use a general method to discover the system of cultural symbols, or the cultural pattern, that organizes a community's communicative practice (Carbaugh, 2005; 2007; 2017; Carey, 2008; Gumperz & Hymes, 1986; Saville-Troike, 2003; Scollo, 2011). Ethnography of communication (Bauman & Sherzer, 1974; Gumperz & Hymes, 1986; Hymes, 1962), for example, argues that to be a competent speaker requires knowing how to speak in culturally appropriate ways – 'communicative competence' as it is called. Communication research should then focus on the speech events of different communities, for which a general, multi-faceted, analytic framework, under the acronym of 'SPEAKING', is proposed. This culture-general approach emphasizes cross-cultural comparison in order to understand the diversity of communicative systems and practices. Although it recognizes cultural variability of human communication, the culture-general approach fails nonetheless to take

account of the interaction between different cultural systems of communication and consequently possible unequal power relations involved therein.

The second, culture-particular approach proceeds from the notion that different cultures, in terms of ways of thinking, world views, concepts, values, rules, etc., organize and so characterize different communities' communication, hence the need for formulating, for example, Afrocentric and Asiacentric meta-theories and theories of communication (Asante, 2006; Miike, 2009; Xiao & Chen, 2009). Such a move not only encourages and enables establishment of cultural models of communication, but also effectively reclaims the identity and authenticity of relevant but marginalized scholarly communities, undermining the presumed universality and superiority of Westcentric theory thereby. However, similar to the approach delineated above, the ensuing indigenous theories fail to pay attention to the interaction between different cultural systems of communication and so also the power relations therein.

The third, culture-incidental approach is predicated on the understanding that the question of culture or cultural background sets in when people from different communities come into contact and communicate with one another. Here communication itself is considered universal and separate from culture whereas different cultures, in terms of native language, knowledge, rules, etc., could become external factors that engender miscommunication (e.g. Spencer-Oatey, Isik-G ler & Stadler, 2012). Thus, the task of intercultural communication studies is to identify cultural factors that cause misunderstandings in communication. A variant of this approach, critical intercultural communication studies, goes one step further in that, besides cultural factors as explanation, it searches for other dimensions as power, history socio-economic relations, institutional/structural forces as well (Holliday, 2011; Nakayama & Halualani, 2011; Neuliep, 2011). All the same, cultures are taken here, not as dialectically embodied in relevant discourses and so as part of analytic focus as is the case with the previous two modes, but as resource for explanation.

Beyond these, it may be noted that tenets over power and prejudice from a diversity of intellectual heritages, movements and currents, such as Chinese and African philosophy (e.g. Tianren Heyi, Umbutu) (Cheng, 1987; Krog, 2008), postmodernism (e.g. social construction of reality, de-centering; Carpentier & Spinoy, 2008), postcolonialism (e.g. resistance to prejudice against and repression of the non-Western world; Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978), antiracism (e.g. fight against white supremacism; Scheurich, 1993; Scheurich & Young, 1997), feminism (e.g. fight against gender inequality; Spender, 1980; Stanley & Wise, 1983), have fertilized CDS, too. But because they are less focused

with communication as envisaged here, I shall discuss no further and turn to a culturally more radical paradigm below.

Cultural discourse studies

It is against the backdrop of the cultural crises, both societal and disciplinary, as well as the promising turn to culture, as delineated above, that Cultural Discourse Studies has emerged since the first decade of the 21st century (see Shi-xu 2005; 2009; 2014; *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* since 2006). As a new paradigm of research, it is manifested in the forms of (a) participants from especially the (under)developing world, (b) heightened cultural consciousness and criticalness in the field, and above all (c) an emerging system providing for and constituted by culturally conscious and critical modes of communication studies, which are committed to combating cultural hegemony on the one hand and enhancing cultural harmony on the other hand (completing the cultural turn in communication studies). Around these features, one may observe an assortment of oeuvres, conferences, publishing platforms, teaching programmes and research frameworks springing up like mushrooms (Shi-xu, 2016).

CDS is predicated on a number of interlinked assumptions. First and foremost, communication is a global system of social interaction in which members use language and other media to achieve purposes in historical and cultural contexts. Secondly, communication is also at the same time a culturally organized system in that it consists in diverse and competing discourses of ethnic communities (hence cultural discourses). This implies that cultural discourses are sites of cultural contention, cooperation and transformation. Thirdly, communication constructs reality, performs action and exercises power, bringing about cultural change thereby. Fourthly, cultural discourses are enabled, guided and shaped by their underlying discourse systems. Finally, the global order of communication in general and of cultural discourses in particular is unbalanced, unfair and unjust but, with the perennial awakening of humanity, is always subject to change towards a higher level of civilization.

Explication of some of the key concepts here is in order. 'Communication' refers to total amount of human social interaction composed, heuristically, of six interlocking components: Communicators, Act, Medium, Purpose, History and Culture (CAMPHAC). Specifically, they are:

Communicators: Speaking/hearing actors, for studying who is (not) speaking/acting, from what social position, in what capacity, etc.;

Act: Verbal as well as non-verbal actions and their constituted social relations, for studying what is (not) said, what is (not) done, how it is said or done, how it is responded to, what kind of social relation evolves, etc.;

Medium: Use of communicative mediums (languages, non-verbal symbols, conventional and new media, channels of communication (legal, governmental, etc), time, place, etc.), for studying what communicative means are (not) used, how they are coordinated, etc.;

Purpose: The motives, goals, effects, outcomes, for studying the reasons and causes of the interactions under study, their results and consequences, whether communicative or further afield;

History: The historical relations involved in all the above, for studying the changes, processes, (dis)similarities of discourses from a temporal point of view;

Culture: The ways of thinking and ways of acting by a social community in power relation to other such communities, usually involving ethnicity, language, religion, habits, tradition.

Methodologically, they become analytic categories for describing, analysing, explaining, interpreting, evaluating discursive practice. Here it may be noted that the all-encompassing analytic framework of CDS is different from the classic 5-W questions used in media studies (Lasswell, 1948; McQuail, 2002) in that the latter fails to pay attention to the historical and (inter)cultural dimensions of communication.

'Discourse' refers to a form of communication (real or potential) of a community in which members use language and other media (e.g. gesture, art, technology, channels, time, place) to achieve purposes in relation to specific history and cultural contexts (e.g. another group's form of communication). Culturally shaped, it constructs reality and exercises power.

'Discourse system' is considered as the configuration of (a) communicative institutions (groups, organizations, facilities, platforms, media, etc. – 'communicative hardware') and (b) communicative know-how (concepts, values, information, principles, tactics, etc. – 'communicative software') which enable, organize and sustain a cultural community's discursive practice and are in power relation with the discourses of other cultural communities; it is their discursive competence and soft power designed to achieve certain goals – parallel to Bourdieu's habitus and social, symbolic and economic capital. It can have profound impact on the success or failure of communication.

'Culture' is used to mean the ways of thinking and ways of acting, including the concepts, values, identities, rules and artefact (spiritual or material) involved, that members of historically evolved ethnic communities (e.g. Chinese/Asian/Developing/Third World, American/Western/Developed World) construct, maintain and use in and through communication in relation to other ethnic communities, usually involving language, ethnicity, religion, habits, history, etc.

In this light, culture is interactive and therefore relational and so also saturated with power. This concept, as well as the East, West, China, Asia, the global South and the like, categorically cannot be understood essentialistically, as if it represented some reified, fixed or homogeneous entity. Moreover, culture is not considered metaphorically along national, gender, generational, professional or organisational lines. Rather, it is conceived of holistically, and so, historically, socially, economically, politically, ethnically, and globally (Roberston, 1992; Tomlinson, 1997), but above all as being embodied in communication, hence cultural discourses. As such, culture is constantly changing and blurred in boundary (Pang, 1993; Shi-xu, 2005). As we believe the power relation and practice, beyond 'differences', of contemporary cultures are central and need urgent attention, the notion of culture is designed also rhetorically to confront cultural hegemony.

Profoundly concerned with the cultural diversity, dynamic and divisiveness of the current human discourses which have hitherto been much been ignored, obscured or explained away in the mainstream, the new paradigm of CDS is designed and dedicated to guiding and practicing culturally conscious and critical modes of CS with a view to fostering cultural innovation and advancement at the level of scholarship and cultural unity, diversity and prosperity at the level of society. 'Culturally conscious' means to be mindful of cultural diversity of communication; 'culturally critical' means to be attentive to power relations in communication. In this sense, CDS is a cultural form of intellectual work and an intellectual form of cultural policy.

To achieve the goals of CDS, practitioners can and should take up a number of interrelated tasks, which may be carried out separately, in tandem, in parallel, or ensemble. These are, to name but a few general ones, (1) to expose and deconstruct ethnocentric discourses of domination, prejudice and exclusion, whether global or local, societal or scholarly; (2) to re-construct locally-grounded and globally-minded frameworks of unfamiliar, mystified or otherwise marginalized cultural discourses; (3) to discover and highlight discourses of cultural cooperation, mutual learning and shared benefit, as well as repressed cultural experiences; (4) to craft action strategies for disadvantaged communities to re-claim cultural identity, authenticity and freedom, and (5) to invent ways for Western and other communities of CS to work together in order to confront the most urgent crises facing humanity. These tasks may be accomplished through researching a large variety of specific questions, such as:

(1) How does the field of CS constitute ethnocentrism (i.e. cultural domination, prejudice and exclusion), e.g. who are the dominant speakers/

gate-keepers and who are excluded? Specifically, whose cultural scholarship (theory, concepts, values, methods, topics, questions, etc.) is being universalized, whose marginalized? What is the current order of information flow like? What does scholarly ethnocentrism imply for academic innovation and societal development? How are we to transform the current unbalanced order of CS discourse in favour of cultural-intellectual diversity and so creativity for CS?

(2) How can we (re)create a culturally conscious and critical framework of cultural discourses, such as the Asian, African, Latin American, or developing world in general, that have so far been insufficiently theorized and studied? What should be the agenda for their scholarship in CS? What are the philosophical, theoretical, methodological and topical assumptions for researching their discourses?

(3) What are the properties, problems and potentials, not just of the culturally dominant discourses, but especially of those that have hitherto been misunderstood, misrepresented, or else silenced? How have the disadvantaged discourses been evolving? How are they related and compared with their historical past? Similarly, how are they related and compared with their cultural others? How are discourses of cultural cooperation, mutual learning and shared benefit constructed?

(4) How can marginalized communities, hence their discourses, be re-invented and empowered, so strategically re-organized, in order to re-claim their identities, re-assert their voices, re-build their images, and so re-gain their positions in the global order of communication?

(5) How can the culturally diverse communities of CS start to engage in egalitarian and sustainable dialogue and debate with a view to enlivening, enriching and enhancing CS? How can we work together to reorient CS toward solutions of the most urgent existential problems facing humanity, say poverty, climate change and nuclear threats?

The research tools in CDS as one can imagine are diversified and dynamic. They are transdisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural; the choice and use of methods are wide-ranging and eclectic, depending on the nature and conditions of the discourses under investigation and the specific research aims.

As part of CDS's methodology, there is a common set of evaluative standards, which are local and global, for researchers to interpret and evaluate cultural discourses. Whilst the global criterion, subject to continuing dialogue across our discipline, is whether and to what extent a discourse is in favour of human cultural flourishing –cultural equality, freedom and prosperity, the local criteria are contingent upon the specific native values and concerns of the relevant cultures, whether or not it has to do with sovereignty, security, or socioeconomic

development. These measures are used to help identify, characterize and adjudicate practices of cultural deprivation, ethnocentrism, imperialism, or otherwise cultural inclusion, cooperation, empowerment.

Furthermore, there are reflexive principles binding the academic actions of the CDS researchers themselves: (a) do not dominate scholarship (e.g. by ignoring cultural diversity, refusing cultural dialogue); (b) do not exercise ethnocentrism (e.g. by universalizing one's own culture); (c) do not forsake one's own culture (e.g. by giving up one's own cultural value and vision); and (d) do not exclude or marginalize cultural-others (e.g. by treating other cultures as deviant).

By now, it may be realized that CDS is both a meta-system, inventing guidelines and tactics for studying cultural discourses, and system-practice, following those guidelines and executing those tactics.

Study of Chinese discourse as exemplar of CDS

Whatever other identities and stance practitioners of CDS may have, they are supposed to proceed from the culturalist stance, as described above, and on that basis, to enrich and enliven CDS, and thereby CS, by drawing upon their own cultural wisdom and values. But it also implies that researchers should 'narrate a "local" story' from a global perspective and 'narrate a "global" story' from a local perspective; when a 'story' is both local and global, as is often the case just as our case below, then the researchers should employ both perspectives, in tandem or parallel. In this light I shall turn to scrutinize the Chinese discourse of defence policy.

It is well-known that Western media as well as academia have been continuously accusing Chinese military of being 'ambitious', 'aggressive', 'opaque,' constituting a Western discourse of what has been termed 'China-threat theory.' My aim then is to study and shed light on the nature and characteristics of China's national military strategy (NMS) discourse as a way of participating in the international debate. It may be noted here that the relation between national military strategy and discourse is dialectic and so discursive: the former must have appropriate organs to formulate and express it through certain mediums to domestic and foreign audiences. The 'Chinese defence discourse' as is studied here has clearly two sides to it: it is local in that it is rooted in Chinese culture and history, but it is global as it has international relevance and audience in view. Given our understanding of the cultural nature of communication, I shall place China's defence discourse in the global interactive context with special reference to the US counterpart.

I have developed a locally-grounded and globally-minded system for studying contemporary Chinese, call it Chinese Discourse Studies, composed of distinctive philosophical, theoretical, methodological and topical frameworks (Shi-xu, 2012; 2014; Shi-xu & Feng-bing, 2013; 施旭, 2010), which may be well suited for the current problem. Thus, philosophically, discourse is taken as unit of diverse elements inter-opposing, interpenetrating, interchanging one another and consequently in constant flux ('holistic ontology'); knowledge of discourse is obtained through dialogue between the researcher and the researched as well as among disciplinary colleagues ('dialectic epistemology'); the moral ethic for discourse research is to help with Chinese society and the humanity as a whole ('use axiology'). Theoretically, where discourse is defined as communicative event in which people interact with one another using language as well as other means in particular historical and intercultural context, the most important norm or principle of contemporary Chinese discourse is 'equilibrium,' i.e. to achieve or maintain harmonious relationship with others through attending to others' interests, incorporating differences, avoiding conflicts, balancing powers, etc.; the rule of communication is making (sense of) meaning beyond language ('harmony-and-supra-language theory'). Methodologically, discourse is studied as a multi-faced and multi-dimensional event where what is (not) said and what is (not) done, for example, are investigated into together ('word-and-deed methodology'). In particular, the development of not only China, but the developing world as a whole, as well as many other related issues and phenomena such as human rights, trade disputes, urban development, security, form the core of the research programme.

To illuminate China's NMS, the white paper entitled China's Military Strategy published by the Information Office of the State Council on June 26, 2015 (examples below are taken from this document unless otherwise indicated, the number following the example indicates the paragraph in which it appears), together with eight white papers since 1998 were collected as core data. To put that in the globally relevant context, America's counterpart, the National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 2015: the United States Military's Contribution to National Security published on July 1, 2015, plus the other five publications since 1992, were used as comparative and relational data as well.

The NMS discourse is analyzed in terms of its key constituent elements: (a) conception, (b) act, and (c) medium. These are examined from historical and cultural dimensions where appropriate. Further, they are evaluated against the criteria of whether they support peace and unity and whether they convey explicit principles of action.

At the level of conception of the NMS discourses, that is, the view of the locus of security, it may be seen that China is inclusive, mutual and cooperative in posture, whereas America is exclusionary, divisive and dominant. Compare: (bracketed numbers below indicate relevant paragraphs):

China: China's destiny is vitally interrelated with that of the world as a whole. A prosperous and stable world would provide China with opportunities, while China's peaceful development also offers an opportunity for the entire world (2).

Countries are increasingly bound together in a community of shared destiny (4).

America: As detailed in the 2015 National Security Strategy, our enduring national interests are: the security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges (25).

At the level of act of the NMS discourses, that is, what the discourse does (to the international community), it may be seen that China embraces peace and cooperation whereas America mounts pressure and barricade:

China: In their endeavor to realize the Chinese Dream of great national rejuvenation, the Chinese people aspire to join hands with the rest of the world to maintain peace, pursue development and share prosperity (1).

America: ...we will press forward with the rebalance to the Asia- Pacific region, placing our most advanced capabilities and greater capacity in that vital theater. We will strengthen our alliances with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. We also will deepen our security relationship with India and build upon our partnerships with New Zealand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh (41).

At the level of medium of the NMS discourses, that is, the way media are mobilized, it may be seen that China employs a variety of communication organs, a diversity of media outlets and a range of semiotic means all at the same time to publicize and explicate its NMS – take for example the media screen shots below, whereas the US merely publishes the documents on the internet. Besides, throughout the 10 white papers of its national defence published so far, China has maintained a stable and nearly predictable defence plan: 'defensive national defence policy' ('防御性国防政策') and 'active defensive national military strategy' ('积极防御的国家军事战略'), whereas the US continuously evolves its policies and strategies (e.g. 'Defensive national defense strategy/

military strategic guideline of active defense', 'A strategy of flexible and selective engagement', 'An integrated military strategy').

Media screen shots

中国政府发表《中国的军事战略》白皮书_图片_新闻_中国政府网

2015年5月26日 -　5月26日,国防部新闻发言人杨宇军在国新办新闻发布会上介绍《中国的军事战略》白皮书。当日,中国政府发表《中国的军事战略》白皮书,强调…

www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015…　▾ **V**₃ - 百度快照

Culturally speaking, China's contemporary defence discourse has reflected and carried over the Chinese traditional holistic world view and the balanced-harmony value, which are by the way also consistent with the nation's socialist system. But America, under capitalism where money speaks, must exploit the military to its fullest.

Conclusion: A disciplinary agenda

For a decade and half or so, CDS has been firming up as a new and alternative paradigm in CS which provides for the construction of cultural frameworks on the one hand and empirical investigation into cultural discourses on the other hand. In the next decade, CDS ought to strive as its goals for the consolidation of the existing global network of CDS whose model of research continues to guide and sustain collaboration and innovation, the expansion of a sizable and influential body of work to change the existing order of CS (by advancement of current projects and creation of new projects on still other cultural discourses the world over and in different socioeconomic domains), and the rejuvenation and elevation of the non-Western community of CDS.

To achieve those goals, culturally conscious and critical scholars across the globe, especially from the non-Western world, must make efforts to

increase international and intercultural communication, mutual learning and collaboration (e.g. between Asian, African, Latin American and any other culturally conscious communities), to explore and develop cultural systems of research by tapping into native realities, experiences and traditions, and to search for ways of empowering discourses of especially marginalized or otherwise disadvantaged communities; and continue to confront and undermine discourses of cultural domination or of any kind threatening human survival.

Fortunately, we now have easy access to the internet and new media, already at our disposal an organization (International Association of Multicultural Discourses), a biannual forum (International Conference on Multicultural Discourses), a periodical (*Journal of Multicultural Discourses*), the book series (*Routledge cultural discourse studies series*), a website (shixu.hznu.edu.cn), as well as a guide (*Handbook of cultural discourse studies*) in the making.

The road is tortuous, but the future is bright.

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