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**Presidential rhetoric in Xi
Jinping's mandate renewal
inaugural speeches**

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引言

自中华人民共和国成立以来，宣传就一直发挥着社会控制的作用，帮助把持集体良知，维护党的利益和权威，传播革命信息。

政治语言应建立在有效演讲的基础上，这种演讲具有说服力，能建立信任，建立共同的理念，最重要的是，能宣示权力，因为从古代到现代，政治演讲中的每一句话一直都是领导人精心设计的重要工具，既能激发信任、使政府合法化、恐吓或安抚选民，也能让人们保持沉默或说服他们支持特定派别。因此，政治语言不能与普通修辞完全相同，否则就达不到诱惑的目的，有时甚至会达到洗脑的严重程度。政治语言必须是一种有限制的规范，在这种规范中，修辞格、词汇单位和某些词语变得不恰当和被禁止。

在习近平的现任领导下，中国已成为一个重要的全球参与者，在世界舞台上扮演着越来越有影响力的角色。习近平使用了一种战略性的、具有说服力的政治语言，不仅加强了他对权力的掌控，还寻求在人民中达成共识。然而，中国的软实力必须得到国际社会的认可和支持。

习近平采用的权力语言融合了中国传统文化和社会主义文化的元素，同时也包含了中国渴望推动的创新主题。他的言辞技巧娴熟，在高亢激昂和口语化之间摇摆，与群众建立了紧密的联系。

本文重点研究当代中国政治话语中的主席修辞，尤其关注第二和第三个五年任期续任的就职演说的内容和模式。相关文本是习近平分别于 2018 年和 2023 年在第十三届和第十四届全国人民代表大会第一次会议上发表的讲话。选择这两个讲话的目的是为了展示和加强政府的统一性，并帮助在民众和国会议员中形成态度和观点。因此，本研究旨在探讨中国共产党的议程及其主要议题在主席的第二任期到第三任期期间是如何演变的，以及如何通过主席的言论提出政治纲领。

这两篇全国两会讲话有力量概括习近平主席在其第二和第三任期内是如何并将如何通过语言艺术和话语风格进行宣传的，有力量全面了解主席的社会经济和政治抱负，而这些抱负在他的规定下是可以实现的。国家主席利用这两个场合对中国人民表示感谢，感谢中国人民对他的信任，并介绍他的政治方向以及中国共产党在中国境内外必须坚持的政策。此外，习近平还将呼吁听众支持中国共产党，因为中国共产党坚持不懈地致力于改善中国及整个国际社会的福祉。

习近平的连任标志着他从 2012 年至 2017 年第一任期开始的领导力的延续。导致其第二和第三任期的历史背景包括几个关键发展。第二、三届任期背景的一个关键事件发生在中

国共产党第十九次全国代表大会期间。习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想被载入《中华人民共和国宪法》。习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想是马克思列宁主义意识形态的直接演变，已经包含了“毛泽东思想”、“邓小平理论”、江泽民的“三个代表重要思想”和胡锦涛的“科学发展观”。

另一个影响未来十年的关键历史时刻发生在 2018 年初。在 2018 年 3 月的全国人大一届一次会议上，中共中央提议取消总统任期两届的限制，实际上是对章程的修改。这一规定是邓小平在 1982 年制定的，目的是取消毛泽东时代盛极一时的终身制和一言堂。因此，邓小平提倡党和国家职能分工和集体领导。

本文将说明，取消总统两届任期限制以及未能任命有效的继任者，将如何作为中国过去 40 年中最关键的政治时刻之一被永远铭记。取消总统任期两届的限制将使习近平能够继续攀登绝对权力的高峰，至少还能继续五年，这将引起西方学者的大量批评。

本文包括五个主要章节，其中第三章和第四章是重点。第一章介绍了两篇就职演说的历史背景。首先，讲话提到了习近平作为中国共产党总书记和中国国家主席的第一个任期，列举了他的所有成就和荣誉。第一章还讲述了习近平必须面对的全球环境和最关键的内部事件。此外，本章还重点介绍了第二任期内发生的历史背景，这些背景将影响习近平第三任期的施政。

第二章介绍了用于分析这两种论述的方法。该方法的灵感来自 Fairclough 1989 年对其 CDA 模型的文本分析，以及 Fairclough 和 Fairclough 2012 年的实用论证系统。分析方法包括将就职演说分成更小的单元，即修辞单元，以便于确定文本单元的位置。这些词包括情态动词、动词、副词、Sketch Engine 的 N-grams、公式化表达、名词和形容词，有助于理解总统辞令是如何传达的，以及党的政治议程是如何通过两个任期演变的。

第三章和第四章分别涉及习近平的第二次和第三次就职演说。两章都采用相同的分节结构：开头的提要概述了习主席涉及的主要话题，然后的定量分析展示了使用 Sketch Engine 工具得出的结果，目的是量化讲话中每个文本单元的出现频率。之后，两篇演讲稿的修辞结构对其划分的主要修辞单位进行了编目，并介绍了每个修辞单位的长度延伸。下一部分是定性分析，通过对各修辞单元中的上述文本单元进行重点分析，对习近平的口才进行检验。第三章和第四章以中间结论收尾，提出了从前面各章小节中确定的语言方面可以看出的所有政治评论。中间结论分为几个小节，分别强调了国内形势和中国实现其目标的手段、中国与一些棘手领土，比如香港、澳门、台湾和新疆之间的地位、中国的国际形势以及从哲学到历史和文化的中国价值观。

第五章，最后一章，是结论，旨在阐明中国政治话语不断演变的性质，特别是在中国共产党宣言和关键问题的背景下。本章强调了习近平政治优先事项的连续性，包括强调社会主义、中国文化传统、经济发展和民族团结，同时也介绍了两份就职演说之间的一些

差异。这些结论再次强调了语言作为政治沟通工具的重要性，以及它在应对中国政治格局中的当代挑战方面所发挥的作用。

第二和第三篇就职演说侧重于现代中国政治话语中的共同主题，比如国内和国际形势、讨论不同类型中国价值观的主题以及实现党的目标的手段。这些主题包括经济和社会政策、内部、外部安全法律和环境法律。两个文本的比较还表明，习近平的政治议程在追求中国特色社会主义、中国梦、中华民族伟大复兴以及科技进步的可持续性对中华人民共和国发展的重要性等关键主题方面具有线性和连续性。

关于这两篇讲话，值得注意的是，由于语言顺应了政治要求，某些主题的重点发生了变化，而政治要求又会随着环境的变化而变化。相同点的存在证明了习近平政治路线的连续性和稳定性，而不同点的存在则证明了这些论述所代表的政治选择不断与时俱进，积极适应时代的演变和国际大局的影响。

第二和第三次就职演说既展示了与历届主席相关的著名老政策，也展示了习近平宣传的特色新元素：马克思列宁主义和社会主义是作为当前中国共产党和中国社会的支柱而保留下来的意识形态。社会主义道路是中国实现其目标必须继续走下去的道路，因为历史证明社会主义是正确的道路。此外，传统的重要性被再次确认为对中国民众的控制，并作为达成共识的重要工具得到巩固和体现。事实上，中国传统提供了深厚的思想和文化纽带，例如，在主席的领导下，儒家和道家思潮再度兴起，为中国的历史智慧遗产做出了贡献。这使得人民得以团结，党得以合法化，最终使党成为这些原则的使者。

因此，党必须在保护中国文化传统的同时促进经济和创新的发展。经济对中国的发展及其在世界上的地位至关重要。因此，两个讲话都强调了发展社会主义现代化经济体系的重要性，同时继续深化各领域的改革。

总之，这项研究有助于我们了解当代中国语言、政治和权力动态之间错综复杂的相互作用。本论文将进一步探讨政治话语不断演变的性质及其对未来的影响。随着中国继续应对复杂的国内和国际挑战，了解中国领导人采用的沟通策略对于全面分析中国的政治格局仍然至关重要。

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on presidential rhetoric in contemporary Chinese political discourse, with particular emphasis on the content and patterns of the inaugural speeches at the second and third five-year term renewals. The relevant texts are the speeches delivered by Xi Jinping 习近平 at the first sessions of the 13th and 14th National People's Congresses in 2018 and 2023, respectively. The analysis focuses on the occurrence and distribution of modal, verbal, adverbial, nominal and adjectival lexical units, formulaic expressions, and repeated phrases in the different rhetorical sections of the two discourses. After an introduction to the historical context, and after the presentation of the methodology for both a quantitative and qualitative analysis, I will identify the recurring elements used to convey the President's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics and the rhetorical patterns rooted in traditional Chinese culture; I will also try to highlight the elements that have already appeared in the political language of previous leaders.

INTRODUCTION

George Orwell (1903-1950) (1946: 11) argued that “In our age there is no such thing as *keeping out of politics*. All issues are political issues”. In a world deeply interconnected in a variety of ways, this argument still holds true today; so, in order to maintain these relationships and succeed as a leader, political language is an art to master.

The expression “political language” was first coined by social sciences and propaganda pioneers and it represents the language of power, consequently it’s a tool used for many political operations such as laws, negotiations, treaties and bargains (Feldman and De Landtsheer 1998: 2-3). As better explained in the next chapter, methodology, language does not merely concern discourse practice, but is also about the sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995: 22-25); thus political rhetoric can craft meanings that inspire trust, legitimize governments, intimidate or reassure the electorate as well as meanings that keep people quiet or that persuade them to support a specific faction. Obviously, the language of politics cannot be identical to the ordinary rhetoric, otherwise it wouldn’t reach its objectives of seduction and, sometimes to the worst extent, brainwashing. It is a restricted code where rhetorical figures, lexical units and some words become inappropriate and prohibited. In China, for example, the state controls the political discourse by manipulating its figures of speech (Schoenhals 1992: 10-15).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following dissertation focuses on the two speeches addressed by Xi Jinping 习近平 (1953-) at the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th National People’s Congress, which took place the 20th of March 2018, hereafter 2nd inaugural speech, and of the first session of the 14th National People’s Congress occurred the 13th of March 2023, hereafter 3rd inaugural speech. Both discourses subject to investigation belong to the genre of inaugural addresses. Riesigl (2008: 252) claims that their core issues focus on the government's policy programme for the forthcoming congressional term. One key goal is to demonstrate and strengthen the government's coherent identity and they furthermore help to shape attitudes and opinions among members of Congress as well as the public, which are both the target audience. Thus, the research aims to examine how:

1. the Chinese Communist Party’s agenda, with its main issues, has evolved during the President’s second term into the third one;
2. the political program is suggested through his presidential rhetoric.

According to its official website, the 中华人民共和国全国人民代表大会 *Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó Quánguó Rénmín Dàibiǎo Dàhuì* ‘National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China’, hereafter also simply mentioned as NPC, is the country’s highest institution of State power. The NPC reassembles once a year for a cycle of five years. It has the authority to

appoint and remove senior state members, i.e. the President, Vice President and delegates of the Standing Committee, revise and control the implementation of the Constitution, amend State laws and organs, analyse and approve the enforcement of China's spending budget and social and economic growth plans, resolve foreign diplomacy matters and constitute municipalities, provinces, autonomous regions and special administrative regions (NPC official website). Notwithstanding that these functions are developed during the NPC meetings, de facto the management of crucial decisions is carried by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and only after that discussed by the Congress (Saich 2015: 3).

The official political translation of state leaders' speeches in the People's Republic of China is a collaborative work between important governmental bureaus, i.e. the 翻译司 *Fānyì sī* Department of Translation and Interpretation, associated with the 中华人民共和国外交部 *Zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó wàijiāo bù* Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the 中央编译局 *Zhōngyāng biānyì jú* Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (Li and Li 2015: 426). The authors explain that's the reason why most of the professionals are part of the CCP and need to combine together the ideology of the speeches, the institutionalised models and their personal expertise. As a result, the translation process is propaganda-permeated and totally institutionalised: state-run agencies, such as 新华通讯社 *Xīnhuá tōngxùnshè* 'Xinhua News Agency' and 北京周报 *Běijīng Zhōubào* 'Beijing Review', are solely responsible for the divulgation of major political papers, speeches and their English translations and cannot make modifications, protecting the uniform articulation of the Chinese thought through translation (Li and Li 2015: 427). For this very own reason, the official Chinese transcriptions of the and the English translations of both inaugural addresses will be taken from the Xinhua News website and the 中国日报 *Zhōngguó Ribào* 'China Daily' website.

The two National People's Congress speeches have therefore the power to give an overview on how the propaganda is and will be spread by the means of Xi Jinping's language art and discourse style during his second and third term and the power to give a comprehensive understanding of the Chairman's socio-economic and political aspirations, which are achievable under his regulations. The President uses these two occasions to show appreciation to the Chinese nation and thank members for the trust placed in him, to present the policies which outline his political direction, and that the CCP will have to adhere to within China and outside its territories. Moreover, Xi will urge the audience to support the Chinese Communist Party because it persistently aims at improving China as well as the entire international community's well-being.

STRUCTURE

This research includes 5 main chapters, with a particular focus on the third and fourth one. The first chapter explains the historical context in which the two inaugural addresses will develop. First of all, it mentions Xi Jinping's first term as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and as President of China by listing all of his achievements and accolades. It also talks about the global environment he had to work with and the most critical internal episodes. Moreover, the

chapter focuses on the historical background taking place during the second mandate, that will shape the governance from 2023 to 2027 or rather Xi's third term.

The second chapter presents the methodology used for the analysis of both discourses. It's inspired by Fairclough's textual analysis of his CDA model (1989) and by Fairclough and Fairclough's 2012 practical argumentation system. The method of analysis consists of dividing the inaugural addresses into smaller units, namely rhetoric units, to facilitate the identification of the textual units' position. These are modal verbs, verbs, adverbs, Sketch Engine's N-grams, formulaic expressions, nouns and adjectives that can be helpful to understand how the presidential rhetoric is conveyed and how the political agenda of the Party evolves through the two mandates.

The third and fourth chapters respectively concern Xi Jinping's second and third inaugural addresses. Both chapters are structured with the same sub-sections: the initial synopsis summarises the main topics touched by Chairman Xi, then the quantitative analysis shows the results obtained with the use of the tool Sketch Engine, with the aim of quantifying the frequency of each textual unit in the speeches. After that, the rhetoric structure of both speeches catalogues the main rhetoric units in which they are divided, presenting the length extension of each of them. The next part, qualitative analysis, provides Xi's oratory examination by focusing on the textual units above-mentioned in each rhetoric units. The third and fourth chapters end with intermediate conclusions, that offer all political comments discernible from the linguistic aspects identified in the chapters' previous sub-sections. The intermediate conclusions are divided into sub sections, highlighting the notions of the domestic situation and the means with which China can reach its goals, the status between China and some thorny territories, such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Xinjiang, China's international situation and lastly Chinese values, that span from philosophy to history and culture.

The fifth and last chapter, the conclusions, aim to elucidate the evolving nature of the Chinese political discourse, particularly in the context of the Chinese Communist Party's manifesto and key issues. The chapter highlights the continuity of Xi Jinping's political priorities, including the emphasis on socialism, Chinese cultural traditions, economic development, and national unity, while also presenting some differences between the two inaugural addresses. The conclusions underscore one last time the importance of language as a tool for political communication and its role in navigating contemporary challenges in China's political landscape.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Xi Jinping's re-elections mark a continuation of his leadership that started with his first term from 2012 to 2017. The historical background leading to his second and third terms includes several key developments. During his first mandate, he achieved great results in the fight against corrupted rivals and institutions, in the strengthening of the military, a sustainable economic development and welfare, as well as a new competitive and nationalistic narrative, promoted through the well-known slogan 中国梦 *Zhōngguó mèng* 'Chinese Dream'. Overall, by centralising authority and encouraging devotion to his leadership, Xi Jinping dramatically cemented control inside the Party, proving him to be "the most powerful Chinese leader since Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), and perhaps since Mao Zedong (1893-1976)" (Minzner, 2015: 138). He gained control over various aspects of governance, the CCP and the military, solidifying his position as a powerful figure within China's political landscape. These triumphs took place in a difficult global period recovering from the 2007-2008 financial crisis, that encompassed a slow economic growth, the rise of extremist organizations like the Islamic State (ISIS) in 2014, important political changes in the West, namely Donald J. Trump's (1946-) election in 2016, as well as tensions in North Korea about nuclear powers (Lindsay 2017).

A pivotal episode of the second and third terms' context occurred during the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, held from the 18th to the 24th of October 2017. The 习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想 *Xí Jīnpíng xīn shídài Zhōngguó tèsè shèhuìzhǔyì sīxiǎng* 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era' was enshrined in the PRC's Constitution (Phillips 2017). It's a direct evolution of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which already incorporates the 毛泽东思想 *Máo Zédōng sīxiǎng* 'Mao Zedong Thought', 邓小平理论 *Dèng Xiǎopíng lǐlùn* 'Deng Xiaoping Theory', 三个代表重要思想 *sān gè dài biǎo zhòngyào sīxiǎng* 'The important Thought of the Three Represents' and the 科学发展观 *kēxué fāzhǎn guān* 'Scientific Outlook on Development'. It can be observed that Xi is associated with Mao and Deng, because their names are officially stated in their principles, whereas Jiang Zemin 江泽民 (1926-2022) and Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 (1942-) are not visibly connected with their philosophies. Moreover, Xi Jinping and Mao Zedong are the only leaders whose names were added in the Constitution while still being fully in power (Miranda 2017).

Another critical and historical moment that will shape at least the next ten years occurred on February 25th 2018: the CCP's Central Committee proposed to abolish the presidential service's two terms limit (Bodeen 2018), effectively amending the statute during the NPC's first session on March 11th 2018 (Xinhua Net 2018). Mackey Frayer (2018) explains that the regulation was stipulated by Deng in 1982, who promoted the division of Party-state functions and a *collective leadership*, in order to remove the lifetime tenures and *one-man rule* that rose to fame during the Maoist era. NBC News (2018) hints that a new cult of personality is firmly converging around Xi

Jinping, reminiscing the instability of the Chairman's Cultural Revolution. The leader's powerful personality cult is, as we have seen, strengthened by constantly rectifying the Constitution, which is utilitarian, flexible and pragmatic because it must adapt to the ruling power and the socioeconomic development. Therefore, during his government the law in China is by no means considered the highest authority of the legal system that could establish itself over politics, economics and social evolution (Spagnoli 2019: 136). The dissertation will show how the abolition of the presidential two terms limit, with the failure to appoint a valid successor, will forever be remembered as one of China's most pivotal political moments in the last 40 years: it will allow Xi to continue undaunted on his climb to absolute power for at least five more years and will arise much criticism from Western scholars.

The build-up to the President's third inaugural discourse includes many events that took place during his second term: on one hand, the background saw the reaffirmation of state dominance and influence over an array of various elements, such as different economic sectors, SOEs (state-owned enterprises), NGOs (non-governmental organizations), foreign initiatives, environmental policies, SARs and public wellbeing (Scobell 2022). As further proof of this, during the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping highlighted all the successes of his past mandate, which have been achieved thanks to the policies undertaken by the Party (Xi 2022). These achievements, which in the third chapter will be displayed as policies and actions to carry out, include a reinforcement of integrity between the population, the Cadres and the PLA, giving further legitimation and sovereignty to the leadership. Moreover, they also include high-quality development in the economic, political, technological and social fields, like a better democracy for the people, improved welfare programs to wipe out poverty and advanced tools to fight for environmental protection, as well as policies to counter block separatist movements and external attacks.

The historical background of the third inaugural speech also counts two important events: the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, fell on October 1st 2019, and the centenary of the Communist Party of China, which took place on July 1st 2021. Both recurrences emphasized the Party's first results in building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, while also reiterating China's willingness to safeguard national stability, social security, its control over Hong Kong and Macau and the One China principle.

On the other hand, Xi's presidency during his second mandate was also more challenging than expected. From 2018 to 2023, it endured multiple difficulties, whose traces can still be found today: the China-US trade dispute, especially instigated by Donald Trump, the 2019-2020 Hong Kong protests, the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2022 visit by the speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan have all deeply impacted the governance for his third 5 years. Without anticipating anything, every single quoted event will be thoroughly presented in the fourth chapter during the analysis of the third inaugural speech.

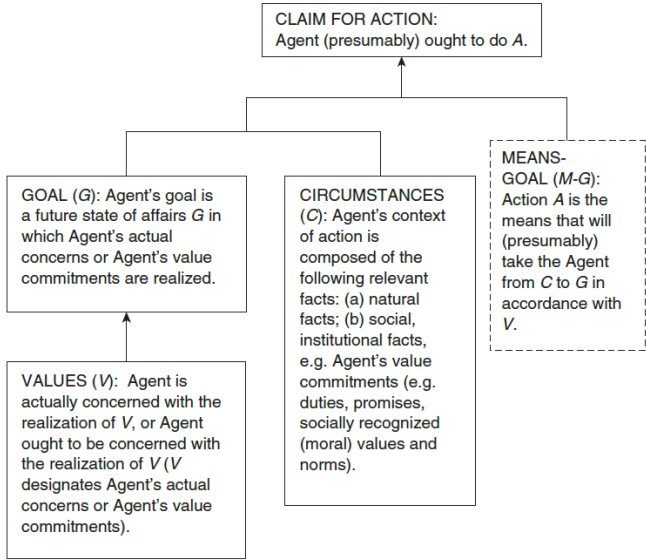
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Norman Fairclough in his acclaimed research ‘Language and Power’ (1989) developed a model called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) because he believed that language was a social practice and that texts, interactions and contexts were all interconnected (Fairclough 1995: 23). The framework is used to study how language and communication influence power dynamics and societal structures, given that the methodology he created is composed of a textual analysis, which examines linguistic elements, an analysis of processes of text production, consumption and distribution, essential to understand how a text is produced, distributed and finally absorbed by the end target, and a sociocultural analysis of the event itself, to comprehend how language reflects and perpetuates the wider society, its hierarchies and inequalities (Fairclough 1995).

To further contribute to the development of CDA, Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) theorized a new method for analysing political discourse: in their book ‘Political Discourse Analysis’, the main focus is to view political discourse as primarily argumentative discourse and to examine the overall features of the entire text rather than isolated features. For it to be effective, practical argumentation must be composed of few irreducible elements, seen in Fig. 1: values (V), goals (G), circumstances (C), means-goal (M-G) and finally claim for action A.

FIG. 1: FAIRCLOUGH AND FAIRCLOUGH’S STRUCTURE OF PRACTICAL ARGUMENTATION (2012: 48).



The former are the speaker’s actual concerns and desires, that motivate the action because he wishes for their realization. Goals (G) are described as future states of affairs in which V can be accomplished, whereas circumstances (C) are the agent’s context of action formed by natural,

social and institutional facts. Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 44) take these two features as premises, because the agent “chooses certain actions over others in view of the goal, [and] because they find themselves in particular circumstances and not others”. Means-goal determine that action A could be the vehicle with which the speaker could go from his circumstances to the realization of his goals and values. Lastly, claim for action A means that the agent *ought to* carry out action A for the accomplishment of the elements above.

Following what has just been said, in other words, the authors argue that political discourse is an argumentative discourse that involves making choices about how to act in response to circumstances and goals, following a certain set of personal concerns and values, and that these choices are based on a practical reasoning. Thus, Fairclough and Fairclough’s approach (2012) is based on a view of politics that emphasizes deliberation and decision-making in contexts of uncertainty, risk, and persistent disagreement, defining an appropriate decision as one that has emerged from a reasonable and dialectical argumentation, that involves the systematic critical testing of reasons, claims, and arguments for action.

In conclusion, Fairclough’s 1989 CDA model and Fairclough and Fairclough’s 2012 practical argumentation method are going to be useful to this dissertation in the analysis of Xi Jinping’s second and third inaugural speeches because they provide a framework to delve into the connections between language, discourse and society. As shown, they focus on unravelling the ways in which language can either support or question, in our circumstances, prevailing ideologies and power dynamics in the People’s Republic of China.

2.2 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The 2nd and 3rd inaugural have been chosen for the purpose of this dissertation because, as the central references of the highest Chinese organ of state power, with extensive legislative authority under the Constitution (Truex 2016: 52), they show and perfectly summarise the most distinctive characteristics of the Chinese official presidential rhetoric.

The thesis’ method of analysis is influenced by Fairclough and Fairclough’s model of practical argumentation and by Fairclough’s CDA textual analysis, which involves examining grammar, vocabulary, metaphors, syntax and other literary elements: the method will describe the context for action, the desirable goals or future state of affairs in accordance with China’s values and concerns, the means to realize them and therefore which action the President and all his people ought to do, while uncovering how language conveys ideologies, representations and power dynamics.

Both qualitative analyses divide their own discourse into rhetoric sections, along the lines of the typical rhetorical structure, namely (1) the introduction part, (2) the narrative, (3) the transition to argumentation, (4) the prescriptive argumentation and (5) the conclusion, which is taken from Sparvoli and Romagnoli’s research (2023: 299) and is visible in Table 2. Longacre (1974) believes that the prescriptive argumentation can be additionally divided according to a procedural or a hortatory orientation: the first tries to emphasize the methods for achieving a specific objective, or

“how to do it”, whereas the latter aims at encouraging individuals to perceive or act in particular manners, or at “influencing conduct” (Van Leeuwen 2008: 346- 347). By doing so, it’s easier to pinpoint where the textual units, presented in the next paragraph, occur in the discourse and it will thus help enrich the qualitative analysis.

TABLE 2: RHETORICAL STRUCTURE (SPARVOLI, ROMAGNOLI 2023: 299)

Rhetoric unit	
1. Introduction	
2. Narrative	
3. Transition	
Argumentation	4. Procedural
	5. Hortatory
6. Conclusion	

The methodology also breaks down both speeches into smaller units, the textual units. The textual elements subject of this dissertation are modal verbs, verbs, adverbs, Sketch Engine’s N-grams, formulaic expressions and nouns and adjectives reinforcing metaphors and political concepts. The modal taxonomy, complete with the prototypical markers, is based on Sparvoli and Romagnoli (2023), which in turn is based on Sparvoli’s previous study (2012, 2017). It adopts the crosslinguistic typological framework of Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) and identifies each modal meaning based on the Chinese language specific analysis by Lü Shunxiang (1942).

TABLE 3: TAXONOMY AND MODAL CLASSIFICATION (SPARVOLI, ROMAGNOLI 2023: 292).

Modality	Subclass	Domain	Modal meaning	Prototypical items
Participant-internal (Dynamic)		POS	(learned) Ability	<i>huì</i> 会 ‘be able’
		POS	Success	Potential construction, <i>néng</i> 能, <i>nénggòu</i> 能够 ‘manage, succeed’
		NEC	Need	<i>xūyào</i> 需要 ‘need’
Participant-external	Deontic	POS	Permission	<i>kěyǐ</i> 可以, <i>néng</i> 能 ‘can’, <i>yǔnxǔ</i> 允许 ‘allow’
		POS	Permission denial	<i>bùde</i> 不得 ‘not permit’
	NEC	Duty, obligation	<i>yīnggāi</i> 应该 ‘should’, <i>yào</i> 要 ‘must’	
		Prohibition	<i>bù yīnggāi</i> 不应该 ‘should not’, <i>bùyào</i> 不要 ‘must not’	
	Anankastic (Circumstantial, Goal-oriented)	POS	Feasibility	<i>néng</i> 能, <i>kěyǐ</i> 可以, <i>nénggòu</i> 能够 ‘can’
			Impossibility	<i>bù néng</i> 不能 ‘cannot’
NEC		Only possibility	<i>bùde</i> 不得不 ‘cannot but’, <i>zhǐhǎo</i> 只要 ‘can only’, <i>bìxū ... cái néng</i> 必须 ... 才能 ‘only if A then B’	
		Practical necessity	<i>bìxū</i> 必须, <i>děi</i> 得, <i>yào</i> 要 ‘must, have to’	
	Exemption	<i>bùyòng</i> 不用, <i>búbì</i> 不必 ‘no need’		
Epistemic	POS	Inference	<i>huì</i> 会 ‘might’	
	NEC	Inference	<i>yīnggāi</i> 应该 ‘should’	
	POS	Probability	<i>kěnéng</i> 可能 ‘probably’	
	NEC	Certainty	<i>yíding</i> 一定 ‘certainly’	
Inevitability		<i>bìjiāng</i> 必将 ‘inevitably’		
Post modal usage		Futurity	<i>huì</i> 会, <i>yào</i> 要 ‘will’	

The analysis of both speeches will be focused on six classes of items and will be carried out with the help of the frequency lists generated by Sketch Engine, a corpus query tool. In other words, this software searches for all recurrent patterns of one or multiple terms in the corpus and organises them and allowing to better collocate their occurrences; thus, it is useful for discourse analysis because it examines a certain type of language and the reoccurrence of its components, to see what it reveals about the participants' attitudes, power dynamics, and viewpoints. More specifically, Sketch Engine creates frequency lists based on the grammar categories (such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) and frequency lists (N-grams) extracting high frequency of tokens (that is the smallest unit that a corpus consists of). The frequency lists being scrutinized include the following items:

1. Modal Verbs
2. Verbs
3. Adverbs
4. Sketch Engine's N-grams,
5. Formulaic Expressions
6. Nouns and Adjectives

The automatically generated lists will be double-checked manually, extracting the list of Modal Verbs from the general list of Verbs, and extracting the nouns and adjectives reinforcing metaphors and political concepts.

Some further explanation is in order concerning the formulaic expressions. The expressions analysed in this research will consist of idioms, phrases, fixed sequences and saying, like the *chengyu*, that can all be related to or refer to Chinese history, literature, philosophy or culture. Taguchi, Li and Tang (2017: 644-645) explain that the latter are established syntactic expressions associated with particular contexts and communication purposes, that serve as valuable linguistic tools. They claim that these units are usually fixed multiword expressions, that stem from our memory as complete, pre-constructed units and that sometimes can also be syntactically irregular. A *chengyu* is also defined by Wu (1995: 81) as “[a] set phrase, an old expression, prevalent in society, used by the common folk, [that] has seen ages of constant use, usually in four-character form with varying constituent constructions and diverse origins”.

These textual elements are the foundation of both quantitative and qualitative analysis carried out in the two addresses: the former is constituted of sub-sections presenting the frequency of each lexical unit. The above-mentioned six lexical items are also the basis on which the qualitative analysis relies: in other words, they are examined to better highlight how Xi Jinping's oratory is disclosed and how the Chinese Communist Party's manifesto and its main challenges are evolving.

CHAPTER 3: XI JINPING'S SECOND INAUGURAL SPEECH AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 13TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

3.1 SYNOPSIS

The Secretary's discourse at the 13th NPC encapsulates the general political guidelines to comply with for the next five years. After a brief introduction, where Xi Jinping shows thankfulness for the faith placed in his hands, several points are touched in which he promises to always value his motherland and execute his duties: he values his country by complimenting all Chinese citizens for their unity, self-improvement and trust in the socialism with Chinese characteristics; he executes his duties by inspiring, with various historic and cultural examples, fellow deputies to carry on the Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation, and by always working hard for the people's well-being and happiness. The main goals to accomplish extend across the improvement of a socialist democracy and culture, the development of the nation's well-being and environment, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan's peculiar statuses, territorial integrity and international aid. The speech ends with promising growth forecasts and a reminder that the Communist Party of China should always serve the people.

3.2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

3.2.1 MODAL VERBS

The 2nd inaugural speech uses modal verbs extensively, with 58 total occurrences. It employs a great variety, with 15 different items and some of their negative forms as well: for example, 要 *yào* 'should, must, will' is found 16 times, 能够 *nénggòu* 'manage, succeed' and 只要 *zhǐyào* 'can only' both count 5 occurrences each, whereas 应该 *yīnggāi* 'should' 3, but 2 of them are presented in its negative form 不应该 *bù yīnggāi* 'should not'. It must be noted that the 7 occurrences of 要 *yào* 'will' in the modality "futurity" express an intermediate concept between duty and necessity: Sparvoli and Romagnoli (2023: 315) claim that "in such instances, 要 *yào* 'will' expresses a commitment for the future, a meaning that somehow encompasses the deontic and futurity reading". As evident in Table 1, the distribution reveals the dominance of participant-external modal verbs, and among them the majority signals anankastic necessity (31%) over deontic necessity (15,5%). Their difference will be better explained throughout the qualitative analysis. Moreover, the futurity or post modal usage must be also highlighted because its presence counts 27,6% of the total modality.

TABLE 4: MODAL DISTRIBUTION BY MODAL CATEGORIES.

Modality	No.	%	Chinese	Modal Meaning	No.
PARTICIPANT-INTERNAL POSSIBILITY	7	12,1%	<i>nénggòu</i> 能够 manage, succeed	Success	5
			<i>néng</i> 能 manage, succeed		2
PARTICIPANT- EXTERNAL DEONTIC NECESSITY	9	15,5%	<i>bùdé</i> 不得 not permit	Permission denial	1
			<i>yào</i> 要 should	Moral duty	5
			<i>yīnggāi</i> 应该 should	Duty	1
			<i>bù yīnggāi</i> 不应该 should not	Prohibition	2
PARTICIPANT- EXTERNAL ANANKASTIC NECESSITY	18	31%	<i>bù néng</i> 不能 cannot	Impossibility	2
			<i>zhǐyào</i> 只要 can only	Only possibility	5
			<i>zhǐyǒu ...cái néng</i> 只有...才 能 only if A then B		3
			<i>bìxū</i> 必须 must, have to	Practical necessity	4
			<i>yào</i> 要 must	Necessity	4
EPISTEMIC	8	13,8%	<i>yídìng</i> 一定 certainly	Certainty	5
			<i>huì</i> 会 might	Inference	1
			<i>bù kěnéng</i> 不可能 cannot	Impossibility	2
FUTURITY (POST MODAL USAGE)	16	27,6%	<i>yào</i> 要 will	Futurity	7
			<i>huì</i> 会 will		1
			<i>jiāng</i> 将 will, be going to		6
			<i>búhuì</i> 不会 will not	Negative futurity	2
Total	58	100%			57

3.2.2 VERBS

Concerning the verb distribution, the second address counts 325 verbs, with a total frequency of 596 times. These results were acquired thanks to the use of Sketch Engine's wordlist tool and they signal the presence of modal verbs as well.

TABLE 5: FIRST 50 VERBS PER PREVALENCE.

Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency
1 是	30	11 能	7	21 创造	5	31 团结	4	41 增强	3
2 发展	16	12 充分	7	22 实	5	32 必须	4	42 有所	3
3 要	16	13 出来	7	23 能够	5	33 贯彻	4	43 领导	3
4 实现	12	14 推动	6	24 代表	4	34 治	4	44 加快	3
5 坚持	11	15 奋斗	6	25 会	4	35 具有	4	45 进行	3
6 有	11	16 形成	6	26 发扬	4	36 高	4	46 担任	2
7 让	9	17 相信	5	27 充满	4	37 维护	3	47 到	2
8 推进	8	18 展示	5	28 走	4	38 应该	3	48 加强	2
9 建设	8	19 大	5	29 起来	4	39 属于	3	49 赋予	2
10 继续	7	20 为	5	30 --	4	40 培育	3	50 辽阔	2

3.2.3 ADVERBS

The second inaugural discourse counts 77 adverbs, with a total frequency of 215 components. These results were also acquired thanks to the use of Sketch Engine's wordlist tool.

TABLE 6: FIRST 20 ADVERBS PER PREVALENCE.

Adverb Frequency		Adverb Frequency	
1 不	19	11 永远	5
2 更	19	12 不断	4
3 始终	15	13 一定	4
4 更加	10	14 也	4
5 就	9	15 共同	4
6 都	8	16 深刻	4
7 最	7	17 积极	4
8 全面	7	18 依法	3
9 将	6	19 只有	3
10 才	6	20 决	3

3.2.4 SKETCH ENGINE'S N-GRAMS

Sketch Engine's N-grams is tool to create frequency lists of sequences of tokens, or rather the smallest unit that a corpus consists of, that can be found in many sentences under scrutiny. For Xi's 2nd inaugural address, the lists comprise 3-4 and 5 items that can occur together.

TABLE 7: 3-4 ITEMS N-GRAMS.

N-gram	Frequency	N-gram	Frequency	N-gram	Frequency
1 中国人民始终	8	11 更加充分地	5	21 我们要以更	5
2 中国特色社会主义	8	12 实的措施	5	22 充分地展示	5
3 实现中华民族	7	13 大的力度	5	23 以更大的	5
4 中华民族伟大	7	14 充分地展示出来	5	24 以更大	5
5 实现中华民族伟大	7	15 更大的力度	5		
6 中华民族伟大复兴	7	16 更实的措施	5		
7 民族伟大复兴	7	17 要以更大	5		
8 更大的	5	18 更加充分地展示	5		
9 更实的	5	19 要以更	5		
10 地展示出来	5	20 我们要以	5		

TABLE 8: 5 ITEMS N-GRAMS.

N-gram	Frequency
1 实现中华民族伟大复兴	7
2 更加充分地展示出来	5
3 要以更大的	5
4 我们要以更大	5
5 以更大的力度	5

3.2.5 FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS

Formulaic expressions are pre-constructed units originating from memory. They are idioms, phrases, fixed sequences, that, in this instance, refer to Chinese history, literature, philosophy or culture. The inaugural speech counts 25 total idioms, or *chengyu*, ranging from the family sphere to the environmental and literary backgrounds, 2 of which conveyed in the same sentence as nouns

determinants (gloss n. 12 in the qualitative analysis). There are also two personifications (16, 17), two fixed sequences, one long (13) and the other of medium length (40), one way of saying (42) and a quotation a famous poem as well.

3.3.6 NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES REINFORCING METAPHORS AND POLITICAL CONCEPTS

The second address counts 436 nouns, with a total frequency of 1035 items, and 77 adjectives, with a total frequency of 167 items. These results as well were all retrieved by using Sketch Engine's wordlist tool. The nouns and adjectives examined will help understand employed metaphors and Chinese political goals and actions.

TABLE 9: FIRST 50 NOUNS PER PREVALENCE.

Noun	Frequency	Noun	Frequency	Noun	Frequency	Noun	Frequency
1 人民	84	14 时代	10	27 文化	5	40 位	5
2 中国	69	15 梦想	9	28 经济	5	41 今天	4
3 中华	27	16 党	8	29 生活	5	42 种	4
4 民族	26	17 祖国	8	30 措施	5	43 能力	4
5 社会主义	18	18 力量	8	31 领导	5	44 族	4
6 国家	18	19 文明	7	32 河	5	45 全国	4
7 精神	17	20 复兴	7	33 力度	5	46 治理	4
8 个	14	21 年	7	34 社会	5	47 工作	4
9 发展	13	22 人	7	35 自信	5	48 我国	4
10 国	13	23 思想	6	36 和平	5	49 利益	4
11 历史	12	24 代表	6	37 民主	5	50 中国人	4
12 世界	11	25 人类	6	38 共和国	5		
13 特色	10	26 体系	5	39 共产党	5		

TABLE 10: FIRST 20 ADJECTIVES PER PREVALENCE.

Adjective	Frequency	Adjective	Frequency
1 伟大	34	11 这样	3
2 新	14	12 深刻	2
3 一	12	13 现代	2
4 大	5	14 小康	2
5 13亿多	5	15 共同	2
6 几千	5	16 宏伟	2
7 长	4	17 爱国	2
8 两	3	18 坚定	2
9 四	3	19 现实	2
10 强大	3	20 重要	2

3.3 RHETORIC STRUCTURE

This speech consists of 4772 Chinese characters, equivalent to 3307 English words in the official translation. The division of Xi's 2nd inaugural address in the six parts explained in the methodology

chapter and shown in table 11 will be critical to pinpoint where the lexical elements, presented above and analysed in the next section, occur in the text.

TABLE 11: SEQUENCE AND LENGTH OF THE RHETORIC UNITS IN THE SPEECH.

Rhetoric unit		Characters number	%
1. Introduction		253	5,3%
2. Narrative		1503	31,5%
3. Transition		694	14,5%
Argumentation	4. Procedural	1145	24%
	5. Hortatory	966	20,2%
6. Conclusion		211	4,5%
Total		4772	100%

3.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The official Chinese text of the speech and its official English translation are respectively taken from the Xinhua News website (Xi Jinping 2018) and the China Daily website (Xi Jinping 2018b), referred to in the Primary sources section of the Bibliography.

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the introduction section, Xi Jinping begins the 13th NPC speech by thanking two fundamental categories that trusted him and supported his political re-election: all fellow deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

«各位代表：

这次大会选举我继续担任中华人民共和国主席，我对各位代表和全国各族人民给予我的信任，表示衷心的感谢！

担任中华人民共和国主席这一崇高职务，使命光荣，责任重大。我将一如既往，忠实履行宪法赋予的职责，忠于祖国，忠于人民，恪尽职守，竭尽全力，勤勉工作，赤诚奉献，**做人民的勤务员**，接受人民监督，决不辜负各位代表和全国各族人民的信任和重托！

一切国家机关工作人员，无论身居多高的职位，都必须牢记我们的共和国是中华人民共和国，始终要把人民放在心中最高的位置，始终全心全意为人民服务，始终为人民利益和幸福而努力工作。»

« Fellow deputies,

I was elected at this session to continue to serve as the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC). I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the trust placed on me by all deputies and Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

It is a glorious mission and weighty responsibility to take on this great position of PRC President. I will, as always, faithfully fulfill my responsibilities empowered by the Constitution, be loyal to the motherland and the people, perform my duty scrupulously, do all my best, be diligent at work, and stay devoted and dedicated. I will continue to **serve as a servant of the people**, accept supervision by the people, and will absolutely not betray the great trust from all deputies and Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

No matter how high a position one holds, all personnel of state organs should keep firmly in mind that our republic is the People's Republic of China, always put the people in the most prominent place in their hearts, always serve the people wholeheartedly, and always work hard for the people's interests and happiness. »¹

As we are going to see throughout the discourse, both groups will be repeated respectively 8 and 4 times, and will be the centre of attention not only for the President's gratitude towards them but for establishment of new implementations as well.

The token noun-adjective 责任重大 *zérèn zhòngdà* 'weighty responsibility' must be taken in order to fulfil the other token noun-adjective 使命光荣 *shǐmìng guāngróng* 'glorious mission'. Xi then adopts the *chengyu* 一如既往 *yī-rú-jì-wǎng* 'as always, just like in the past' to hint how he will continue to serve China. They are the outcome, in form of few characters, of several centuries of history and experiences of a population, and this is where their straightforwardness, impact and rhetorical efficacy stem from. This type of idiomatic expressions can therefore convey multiple layers of symbolic meaning (Wu 1995: 82), hence will frequently appear in both speeches, and is often meant for classical literature-savvy listeners. In this case, it's clear the first term is considered a success and the community, confident about its leader, can expect the same positive results in the next five years.

Already from the initial excerpt, it is discernible that loyalty, trust and justice are exemplary qualities a political man must possess in order to administer a government focused on people's needs. The adjectives 忠实 *zhōngshí* 'faithful' and 忠于 *zhōngyú* 'loyal to', the *chengyu* 恪尽职守 *kè-jìn-zhí-shǒu* 'perform one's duty scrupulously' and the sentence (1) all epitomise the relevance of social morality and the maturation of one's personal ethics and eventually will further legitimise the Secretary's power.

(1) 做人民的勤务员

zuò rénmin de qínwùyuán

do people DE servant

'to serve as a servant of the people'

These virtues are persuasive tools in China's political legitimisation because are saturated with thousands of years of history: Confucius 孔子 (551-479 BC) cultivated the idea of 君子 *jūnzǐ*, a 'noble, superior man' who was faithful to the morals of benevolence, righteousness, rites, wisdom and integrity. By following Confucian qualities, Xi Jinping is not only seeking support and validating his place in politics, but Scarpari (2015: 175) also notices that he is trying to regain a

¹ For all quotations and examples in this Chapter, Official English translation from Xi Jinping (2018b).

millennial ethical model, that combines today's individualism and economics with solidarity, trust and faith in the community, which is going to be useful in the creation of a new socialist morality.

Subsequently the Chairman reveals in advance some initial guidelines regarding the PRC's internal politics and the deputies' positions and obligations. He remarks to all comrades, from the lowest to the highest ranks, that the Chinese population and their happiness must be prioritized over all other matters of the Party. He stresses this concept by choosing a very meaningful *chengyu*, 全心全意 *quán-xīn-quán-yì* 'wholeheartedly', which makes the listener understand the CCP should give its heart and soul to serve the country, and the modal verbs 必须 *bìxū* 'must' and 要 *yào* 'should'. Modality is adopted to highlight the validity, certainty and believability of the responsibilities and directives to be followed by fellow deputies and the head of the state himself. Modal verbs can be divided into a deontic sphere, that in other words convey moral duties and obligations, and into an anankastic sphere, expressing practical necessities and inevitabilities (Sparvoli and Romagnoli 2023: 293-294) and both types can be used by leaders to influence public opinion, gain consensus and bring citizens on their side. As mentioned, the two here disclose the practical necessity of prioritizing the people and their interests above anything else.

3.4.2 NARRATIVE

Turning now to the narrative unit, to further point out the weight Chinese people possess over politics, the speech proceeds to describe them through multiple metaphors and to also emphasize their history and culture. This part mostly talks about their spirit, 精神 *jīngshén* 'spirit', that is forged by China's past and at the same time will forge its future as well: as proof of this, the narrative counts 14 out of the 17 total occurrences of the noun.

«各位代表!

人民是历史的创造者，人民才是真正的英雄。波澜壮阔的中华民族发展史是中国人民书写的！博大精深的中华文明是中国人民创造的！历久弥新的中华民族精神是中国人民培育的！中华民族迎来了从站起来、富起来到强起来的伟大飞跃是中国人民奋斗出来的！

中国人民的特质、禀赋不仅铸就了绵延几千年发展至今的中华文明，而且深刻影响着当代中国发展进步，深刻影响着当代中国人的精神世界。中国人民在长期奋斗中培育、继承、发展起来的伟大民族精神，为中国发展和人类文明进步提供了强大精神动力。

中国人民是具有伟大创造精神的人民。在几千年历史长河中，中国人民始终辛勤劳作、发明创造，我国产生了老子、孔子、庄子、孟子、墨子、孙子、韩非子等闻名于世的伟大思想巨匠，发明了造纸术、火药、印刷术、指南针等深刻影响人类文明进程的伟大科技成果，创作了诗经、楚辞、汉赋、唐诗、宋词、元曲、明清小说等伟大文艺作品，传承了格萨尔王、玛纳斯、江格尔等震撼人心的伟大史诗，建设了万里长城、都江堰、大运河、故宫、布达拉宫等气势恢弘的伟大工程。今天，中国人民的创造精神正在前所未有的地迸发出来，推动我国日新月异向前发展，大踏步走在世界前列。我相信，只要 13 亿多中国人民始终发扬这种伟大创造精神，我们就一定能够创造出一个又一个人间奇迹！»

« Fellow deputies,

People are the creators of history; people are real heroes. The magnificent development history of the Chinese nation was written by the Chinese people! The extensive and profound Chinese civilization was created by the Chinese people! The

spirit of the Chinese nation, which has been kept fresh and alive throughout history, was cultivated by the Chinese people! The endeavor of the Chinese people has led to a tremendous transformation of the Chinese nation: it has stood up, grown rich, and is becoming strong!

The character and talent of the Chinese people have fostered the **Chinese civilization with a history of thousands of years**. It has also exerted a far reaching influence on the development of China and on the ethos of the Chinese people nowadays. The great national spirit, fostered, passed down and developed by the Chinese people during their long-term struggle, has offered a strong impetus for the development of China and the human civilization.

The Chinese people are people with great creativity. During the thousands of years of history, the Chinese people have always been laboring, innovating and creating with diligence. Our country has been the birthplace of world-renowned great thinkers such as Laozi, Confucius, Zhuangzi, Mencius, Mozi, Sunzi and Han Feizi. The Chinese people's magnificent scientific achievements such as paper-making, gunpowder, printing and compass have profoundly influenced the progress of the human civilization. We created great art works of the Book of Songs, the songs of Chu Kingdom, the rhyme prose of Han Dynasty, the poetry of Tang Dynasty, the iambic verses of Song Dynasty, the drama of Yuan Dynasty and the novels of Ming and Qing dynasties; we passed down the powerful Epic of King Gesar, the Epic of Manas and the Epic of Jangar; we built the mighty projects of the Great Wall, the Dujiang Weir, the Grand Canal, the Forbidden City and the Potala Palace.

Today, the creativity of the Chinese people are being unleashed to an extent like never before, which has been enabling our country to develop rapidly and **stride forward at the forefront of the world. I am confident that as long as the over 1.3 billion Chinese people keep on developing such great creativity, we will definitely** create miracles one after another!»

The paragraphs start with the syntactic pattern (2) and end with (3), which are going to be repeated respectively 6 and 4 times in the narrative section. The former unfolds the Chinese citizens' main characteristics, whereas the latter reveals Xi's certainty in the success of his country, conveyed by the modal adverb 一定 *yídìng* 'certainly' and the participant internal verb 能够 *nénggòu* 'manage, succeed'. As it will also be proven in other sections of the narrative unit, the President makes use of many modals conveying epistemic possibility/impossibility and participant internal success, just like the modal adverb 一定 *yídìng* 'certainly' and the modal verb 能够 *nénggòu* 'manage, succeed', to present the possibility, thus future success, to improve China and realize the management of its full potential.

(2) [中国]人民是... [*Zhōngguó*] *rénmín* *shì*... '[China]-people-be, Chinese people are...'

(3) 我相信, 只要 13 亿多中国人民始终发扬这种伟大 XX 精神, 我们就一定能够...

wǒ xiāngxìn, zhǐyào shísān yì duō Zhōngguó rénmin shǐzhōng fāyáng

I believe, if only 13 hundred million more China people all along carry on

zhè zhǒng wěidà XX jīngshén, wǒmen jiù yídìng nénggòu...

this CLF great spirit, 1PL then certainly be able to...

'I believe as long as more than 1.3 billion Chinese people uphold the great XX spirit, we will definitely...'

In the narrative part, phrases that will then be encountered in the other rhetorical units as well can be found. In political language, repetitions of sentences, words or characters offer numerous benefits: by working in close contact with rhythm, they simplify the memorization of a text, giving the perception of accuracy and validity, so that it will ultimately be accepted (Link 2013: 265). Rhythmic repetitions mesmerize the recipients, who become progressively inclined to believe or

agree with what is being said because they have heard it more than once and have familiarized with such thoughts. Other repeated sentences detectable in the speech are (4) and (5) in the procedural argumentation and (6) in the hortatory argumentation. It must be noted that (4) and (6) present 2 modal verbs, 要 *yào* ‘will’ and 将 *jiāng* ‘will, be going to’, which allude to a futurity reading. The peculiarity of 要 *yào* is that it also expresses a nuanced sense of participant external necessity, like it was announced in section 3.2.1.

(4) 我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施...

wǒmen yào yǐ gèng dà de lìdù, gèng shí de cuòshī...

1PL will use more big DE strength, more true DE measures

‘we will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in...’

(5) 让...更加充分地展示出来

ràng...gèngjiā chōngfèn de zhǎnshì chulai

let more ample DE show arise

‘so as to better demonstrate...’

(6) 中国将继续

Zhōngguó jiāng jìxù

China will continue

‘China will continue to’

This sentence pattern visible in (2) opens the way for various descriptions of the Chinese people conveyed by metaphors. People are described as 历史的创造者 *lìshǐ de chuàngzàozhě* ‘creators of history’ and as 真正的英雄 *zhēnzhèng de yīngxióng* ‘real heroes’, affirming that China’s millennial and remarkable history was hand-crafted by and for the community. Thus, since it has occurred throughout centuries and centuries and its success has been ascertained, the people have all the rights to participate to the modern political discussion and to the further development of the country. The idiom 波澜壮阔 *bō-lán-zhuàng-kuò* ‘surging forward with great momentum’, especially the noun 波澜 *bōlán* ‘waves’, recalls an idea of swift and impactful development of the PRC, comparable to big and powerful tides. Furthermore, the antithetic contrast between the two adjectives 历久 *lìjiǔ* ‘last for a long time’ and 新 *xīn* ‘new, up-to-date’ emphasizes that the Chinese spirit has maintained its core intact while at the same time has updated itself to conform to new standards and to people’s modern characteristics and ways of living. Chairman Xi continues his flow of thoughts about the extraordinary Chinese spirit and the greatness of the country’s history. In doing so, he clarifies once again the millennial yet contemporary existence of its rich culture by pronouncing the sentence (7), feeding national pride about past origins and future cultural legacy.

(7) 绵延几千年发展至今的中华文明

miányán jǐ qiān nián fāzhǎn zhìjīn de zhōnghuá wénmíng
continuous some thousand years develop so far DE China civilization
'Chinese civilization that has developed for thousands of years up until now'

One thing noticeable in the paragraph expound the narrative of “the great creativity” (伟大创造 *wěidà chuàngzào* ‘great creativity’) is the length of the main sentence, that counts 165 characters compared to the 60-90 characters of a medium length sentence. Despite the difficult articulation, its syntax analysis and segmentation are helped using multiple types of commas, which are more common in Mandarin than in other languages and thus are essential contributors in grammar (Jin *et al.* 2004: 1). Moreover, this type of syntactic structure chosen is familiar to native speakers and listeners, and therefore very easy to follow, thanks to multiple reiterations, even when a variety of different topics are pulled together.

The discourse addresses that the creativity which characterized the “Chinese spirit” is present in different fields: as remarked by the text, in science and technology with the achievements of paper-making, gunpowder, printing and compass, in literature with many classical masterpieces, in engineering and architecture with the construction of mighty projects like the Great Wall of China and the Forbidden City and in philosophy. Chinese philosophy is well-known and appreciated in the Western world, especially thinkers like Laozi 老子, Confucius 孔子, Mencius 孟子 (372-289 BC) and Zhuangzi 庄子 (369-286 BC). Their streams of thoughts have been so influential to be able to blend together Chinese ethnicities’ diverse cultural roots, as well as delineate its national identities into a comprehensive one. Today, these philosophies are taken into consideration in people’s routine to conduct a righteous life, but can also inspire harmony and collaboration with international players. Clearly, this remarkable creativity in so many different fields has risen China to fame multiple times.

Xi employs verbs like 创造 *chuàngzào* ‘create’ here displayed, or 建成 *jiànchéng* ‘establish’, often paired with metaphors, precisely because they communicate very specific meanings: Magagnin (2016: 357) claims they are connected to the field of building and construction and convey messages of reliability, stability and reality. These choices thus view the realization of Chinese Socialism, with all its ideal projects, as a “construction”, following that “society is a construction”. Furthermore, Magagnin attests this process is normally urged among a community and at the end is achieved through the joint efforts of both the speaker and the listener. Xi is exhorting both people and the political leadership to join forces with the objective of building socialism and a better society. In the Chinese political debate, socialism tends to be represented through the metaphor of the path (Turowski 2022), in which citizens should get on and follow the “Chinese road”, in order to strive for modern progress and improvements. In the last sentence of the paragraph, multiple are the references to this concept: the adverb 向前 *xiàng qián* ‘forward’ indicates the direction in which China strides at the forefront of the world (8).

(8) 大踏步走在世界前列

dà tàbù zǒu zài shìjiè qiánliè
big stride walk stay world front row
'strides at the forefront of the world'

Based on the notion of conceptual metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 73), it can be said that (8) conveys the general idea that "Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a path". With this association, Chinese people sense that building a real, powerful, socialist nation is a long journey full of obstacles, sacrifices and ups and downs, but, despite this, they are willing to accept the socialist challenge for the sake of the realisation of everybody's welfare and personal aspirations. By using 前所未有 *qián-suǒ-wèi-yǒu* 'unprecedented' means, the idiom 日新月异 *rì-xīn-yuè-yì* 'change with each passing day' and the adverb 始终 *shǐzhōng* 'from beginning to end, all along', the past, present and future dimensions of time are once again important for the construction of a greater China. 始终 *shǐzhōng* 'from beginning to end, all along' is part of the 3 items N-grams 中国人民始终 *Zhōngguó rénmin shǐzhōng* 'Chinese people have always' that, with its 8 occurrences all located in the narrative sections, highlights even more the long journey of the nation.

There is one more important aspect to analyse. Parenthetical verbs, which are hereinbefore represented by 相信 *xiāngxìn* 'have faith in' five times, have been long studied in political discourses and propaganda during the 80ies and 90ies. J.O. Urmson (1952: 481) denotes that a parenthetical is a verb which "can be used followed by 'that' and an indicative clause, or else can be inserted at the middle or end of the indicative sentence". Simon-Vandenberg (2000: 48) reports that the collocation of these verbs is fundamental and greatest effects result from positioning them at the beginning of a sentence, as clearly noticeable in the 13th NPC second inaugural speech. The choice of starting a sentence with such elements indicates the desire to convey attitudes towards specific opinions with confidence. Xi Jinping, without any reconsiderations, has faith in his country's abilities and outlook and thus strongly believes that his people need to cultivate themselves in order to keep conceiving great miracles. Moreover, parenthetical verbs possess a profound rhetorical value and can be "followed by a clause expressing obligation and necessity: the speaker thus conveys his/her opinion on what needs to be done in the future, using [the parenthetical verb] to qualify a 'proposal' rather than a proposition." (Simon-Vandenberg 2000: 53).

«中国人民是具有伟大奋斗精神的人民。在几千年历史长河中，中国人民始终革故鼎新、自强不息，开发和建设了祖国辽阔秀丽的大好河山，开拓了波涛万顷的辽阔海疆，开垦了物产丰富的广袤粮田，治理了桀骜不驯的千百条大江大河，战胜了数不清的自然灾害，建设了星罗棋布的城镇乡村，发展了门类齐全的产业，形成了多姿多彩的生活。中国人民自古就明白，世界上没有坐享其成的好事，要幸福就要奋斗。今天，中国人民拥有的一切，凝聚着中国人的聪明才智，浸透着中国人的辛勤汗水，蕴涵着中国人的巨大牺牲。我相信，只要 13 亿多中国人民始终发扬这种伟大奋斗精神，我们就一定能够达到创造人民更加美好生活的宏伟目标！

中国人民是具有伟大团结精神的人民。在几千年历史长河中，中国人民始终团结一心、同舟共济，建立了统一的多民族国家，发展了 56 个民族多元一体、交织交融的融洽民族关系，形成了守望相助的中华民族大家庭。特别是近代以后，在外来侵略寇急祸重的严峻形势下，我国各族人民手挽着手、肩并着肩，英勇奋斗，浴血奋战，打败了一切穷凶极恶的侵略者，捍卫了民族独立和自由，共同书写了中华民族保卫祖国、抵御外侮的壮丽史诗。

今天，中国取得的令世人瞩目的发展成就，更是全国各族人民同心同德、同心同向努力的结果。中国人民从亲身经历中深刻认识到，团结就是力量，团结才能前进，一个四分五裂的国家不可能发展进步。我相信，只要 13 亿多中国人民始终发扬这种伟大团结精神，我们就一定能够形成勇往直前、无坚不摧的强大力量! »

The Chinese people are people with great spirit of struggle. Over the past thousands of years, the Chinese people have been discarding the old and introducing the new. Our pursuit of progress has never paused. We have developed and built an immense and beautiful country, and explored vast expanse of territorial seas. We have opened up extensive and productive cropland, reined in numerous rampant rivers, and overcome countless natural disasters. We have constructed towns and villages scattered all over the country and developed a complete range of industries. Varied and colorful lives have taken shape. The Chinese people have been aware since ancient times that we cannot sit idle and enjoy the fruits of others' work, and happiness can only be achieved through great endeavor. What the Chinese people have achieved stems from ingenuity and expertise, hard work, and enormous sacrifices. **I believe as long as more than 1.3 billion Chinese people uphold the great struggling spirit, we will definitely** fulfill the great goal of creating a better life.

The Chinese people are people with great spirit of cherishing unity. Over the past thousands of years, **the Chinese people have been united** and stuck together through thick and thin. We have built a united country with various nationalities, developed harmonious relationships between 56 diverse, interwoven ethnic groups, formed a big Chinese family where they keep watch for and help defend each other. Especially since modern times, in face of critical and grave foreign invasion, all ethnic groups stood hand in hand and fought heroically and painfully to defeat all extremely vicious invaders and safeguard the national independence and freedom, jointly drawing a magnificent epic of defending the Chinese nation against foreign aggression. Today, China, with all ethnic groups striving with one heart, has achieved extraordinary accomplishments. The Chinese people have learned from our own experience that only when we are united can we be strong and march forward, and **a divided country will not progress. I believe as long as more than 1.3 billion Chinese people uphold the great spirit of unity, we will definitely** forge an **unstoppable and invincible force.**

The token 奋斗精神 *fèndòu jīngshén* ‘spirit of struggle’ now meets with the head of state’s praises. Magagnin (2016: 356) argues the verb 奋斗 *fèndòu* ‘fight, struggle’ represents a war metaphor and creates the association “the realization of Socialism is a struggle”, which can suggest the need for endurance, bravery and self-sacrifice. Xi endeavours to innovate by playing an important card: the idiom 革故鼎新 *gé-gù-dǐng-xīn* ‘to discard the old and introduce the new’ concerns the rejection of the past to favour future improvements. The origin of this saying and its current meaning will be presented in the intermediate conclusions.

Li and Su (2022: 18-21) claim that Xi Jinping's language not only highly analyses the original mission of the Chinese Communist Party, but also embodies the spirit of the Chinese nation of self-improvement and the tenacity of a great nation and cultural self-confidence, reflecting the main attributes of nationhood. The Chairman in the narrative section adopts the *chengyu* 自强不息 *zì-qíáng-bùxī* ‘make unremitting efforts to improve oneself’ to convey that his people tremendously desire to continuously cultivate their souls. This idea of self-improvement is another example of the legacy of Confucian education. With his philosophy, Confucius advocated for a steady learning that could take multiple steps to achieve, only if it focused on persistence and perseverance (Enyiazu, Nwigwe 2021: 6). That is exactly how Xi is describing Chinese people throughout the centuries.

A strong feeling of patriotism and attachment to nature and the environment stems from this section of the narrative: the PRC is described by token adjectives-nouns 大好河山 *dàhǎo héshān* ‘beautiful rivers and mountains’ and thanks to the people and the CCP’s immense efforts was built to be the outstanding country that is today. These efforts, in the leader’s opinion, include various actions like the exploration of ocean frontiers, the cultivation of agricultural fields, the control of untamed water flows, the overcome of natural disasters and the development of opportunities for

a better life, such as the construction of industries and towns. The villages and cities built because of the party's measures are 星罗棋布 *xīng-luó-qí-bù* 'spread all over the place', creating a powerful connection between those municipalities and the stars or the chess pieces. The rational use of these types of proverbs makes the General Secretary's language vivid, suggestive and expressive, gaining a high degree of emotional recognition from the general public (Wang 2020: 80-81).

Xi Jinping not only acclaims what has been achieved, but also praises the people that helped throughout the process and that will continue to do so. In fact, they are driven by dedication to advancements and perseverance and do not exploit the hard work of others, without doing anything, to enjoy their results, like the presence of the *chengyu* 坐享其成 *zuò-xiǎng-qí-chéng* 'sit idle and enjoy the fruits of others' work' highlights. The idiom here, while retaining important and authoritative nuances, not only signs popular wisdom and tradition, but familiarity and affinity to the discourse's content as well. Their accomplishments were made and will be made possible by their intelligence, wisdom, hard work and immense sacrifices.

(9) 中国人民始终团结一心

Zhōngguó rénmin shǐzhōng tuánjié yī xīn
 China population throughout unite one heart
 'the Chinese people have been united as one'

(10) 一个四分五裂的国家不可能发展进步

yī gè sīfēnwūliè de guójiā bù kěnéng fāzhǎn jìnbù
 one CLF disintegrate DE country not possible develop progress
 'a divided country will not progress'

(11) 勇往直前、无坚不摧的强大力量

yǒng-wǎng-zhí-qián, wú-jiān-bùcuī de qiángdà lìliàng
 brave-move-forward-in front、not-hard-not-destroy DE powerful strength
 'implacable and irresistible strength'

Moving forward with the second inaugural address, the attention shifts to the token verb-noun 团结精神 *tuánjié jīngshén* 'spirit of unity' which, thanks to the character 团 *tuán* 'group, society' expresses the willingness to gather the Chinese people to share relationships united as one (9) and to create a community that pulls together in times of trouble with the use of the idiom 同舟共济 *tóng-zhōu-gòng-jì* 'unite in difficult times'. The latter metaphor is very effective because its literal translation means 'cross a river in the same boat', conveying the sense that everyone will stick together, without leaving anyone behind even during cumbersome times. The last reference to the relevance of territorial solidarity lies in 'a divided country will not progress' (10): Xi claims that

only if China is unified in its 56 ethnic groups, it can shape an implacable and irresistible strength (11). Example (10) provides the modal verb 不可能 *bù kěnéng* ‘cannot, impossible’ that expresses the impossibility of a divided country to develop and progress in the future; by connecting the various modal verbs in this narrative section, it can be deduced that this entire part deeply highlights the notion of possibility and impossibility in relation to the evolution and growth of the People’s Republic of China.

Other than words stimulating common integrity, verbs from the war dominion appear to further describe the Chinese nation in the past. They 英勇奋斗 *yīngyǒng fèndòu* ‘fought bravely’, 浴血奋战 *yùxùè fènzhàn* ‘fought bloody’, 捍卫 *hànwèi* ‘defended’ the country and at last 打败 *dǎbài* ‘defeated’ the enemies during a period of foreign aggression, which can be deduced to recall the Century of Humiliation (中国百年屈辱史 *Zhōngguó bǎinián qūrǔ shǐ* ‘China’s century-old history of humiliation’). The General Secretary here associates a difficult historical episode to the resilience of his people, promoting national bravery, social unity and patriotism. As a result, in order to boost Chinese nationalism, Callahan (2004: 200-203) explains the leader can recall both glorious moments and suffered injustices, because the latter aren’t only a matter of victimization, but an opportunity to recover from past symbolic wounds.

«中国人民是具有伟大梦想精神的人民。在几千年历史长河中，中国人民始终心怀梦想、不懈追求，我们不仅形成了小康生活的理念，而且秉持天下为公的情怀，盘古开天、女娲补天、伏羲画卦、神农尝草、夸父追日、精卫填海、愚公移山等我国古代神话深刻反映了中国人民勇于追求和实现梦想的执着精神。中国人民相信，山再高，往上攀，总能登顶；路再长，走下去，定能到达。近代以来，实现中华民族伟大复兴成为中华民族最伟大的梦想，中国人民百折不挠、坚忍不拔，以同敌人血战到底的气概、在自力更生的基础上光复旧物的决心、自立于世界民族之林的能力，为实现这个伟大梦想进行了170多年的持续奋斗。今天，中国人民比历史上任何时期都更接近、更有信心和能力实现中华民族伟大复兴。我相信，只要13亿多中国人民始终发扬这种伟大梦想精神，我们就一定能够实现中华民族伟大复兴!»

«**Chinese people are people** with great spirit of pursuing dreams. Over a history of thousands of years, Chinese people have always held fast to their dreams and make endless efforts. Not only have we formed the ideal of living a well-off life, but also **an aspiration for the common good**. Ancient Chinese mythologies, such as Pangu creating the world, Nyuwa patching up the sky, Fuxi drawing eight diagrams, Shennong tasting herbs, Kuafu chasing the sun, Jingwei filling up the sea and Yugong removing mountains, deeply reflect Chinese people’s perseverance in dauntlessly pursuing and realizing dreams. It is Chinese people’s firm belief that **no matter how high a mountain is, if you keep climbing, you will reach the top; no matter how long a road is, if you keep walking, you will reach your destination**. Since modern times began, to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation has become the greatest dream of Chinese nation. Chinese people never yield despite reverses, and they stand firm and indomitable. With the spirit of fighting the enemy to the last minute, the resolve of recovering the lost on the basis of self-reliance, and the ability of rising up among the community of nations, the Chinese people have made continuous efforts for more than 170 years to fulfill the great dreams. Today, we are closer, more confident, and more capable than ever before in making the goal of national rejuvenation a reality. **I believe that as long as more than 1.3 billion Chinese people keep carrying forward this great spirit of pursuing dreams, we can and will realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.**»

(12) 秉持天下为公的情怀

bǐngchí tiān-xià-wèi-gōng de qíng huái
 adhere to sky-under-for-collective DE feelings
 ‘uphold the feeling that sees the world as a single community’

The last feature of the Chinese spirit outlines the capacity of pursuing one's own dreams as well as the global community's wishes, perception that can be grasped by the sentence 'uphold the feeling that sees the world as a single community' (12). The concepts of harmony and unity, given by the *chengyu* 天下为公 *tiān-xià-wèi-gōng* 'the whole world as one community', are distinctive features of Confucianism and can help Xi to gain more consensus on a society with shared future. As reported by Wei (2023: 5-6), in current Chinese political discourse, the Confucian notion of harmony is considered as an important factor that can stimulate international development, relationships and win-win cooperation and it can help citizens to better grasp the key vision of the community of shared future for mankind.

Xi Jinping then continues with references of folkloristic characters. In ancient mythology, Pangu and Nyuwa are primordial beings and heroes respectively credited with creating the earth and human race and today are symbols of wisdom and bravery. Fuxi, Nyuwa's brother and member of the Three Sovereigns, is also recognised as the other progenitor of humanity, as well as the inventor of animal domestication, fishing, the calendar, the Yi Jing divination manual and the Eight Trigrams. According to the popular legend, Shennong, also a member of the Three Sovereigns, is speculated to have tried hundreds of medical herbs, allowing him to become the "Divine Farmer" and to significantly develop the traditional Chinese medicine (Shen Yun Performing Arts 2023). Kuafu, who chased the sun in vain and died of dehydration, is a symbol of an optimistic and brave person, determined to conquer any difficulties in order to achieve their objectives. 夸父追日 *Kuāfū-zhuī-rì* 'Kuafu races with the sun' has become an everyday and political idiom that translates to 'overestimate oneself and seek to do something beyond one's ability'. On the other hand, the girl Jingwei died drowning in the Eastern Sea, reincarnated into a bird, willing to fill up the sea to avoid that others could have her same ending. This story grew so famous in Chinese culture that the idiom 精卫填海 *Jīngwèi-tián-hǎi* 'mythical bird Jingwei trying to fill up the sea with pebbles' is today a *chengyu* for 'determination in the face of impossible odds'. Lastly, Yugong is remembered as the archetype of willpower and perseverance because, annoyed by the obstruction of the mountains, he attempted to move them despite his old age. His tale is eradicated into Chinese culture and language as well, because 愚公移山 *Yúgōng-yí-shān* 'Yugong who removed the mountains' in present times means 'do seemingly impossible things with dogged perseverance and succeed eventually; where there's a will, there's a way' (Qian 2018).

Xi then decides to introduce the concept of the Chinese Dream of great national rejuvenation of the nation (中华民族伟大复兴 *Zhōnghuá mínzú wéidà fùxīng* 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation') with an idiom that, once again, expresses the values of tenacity and determination that can be found in his population (13). Here, once again, the concept of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a path' is presented through metaphors regarding the road to follow. It operates as the leader rhetoric's hallmark, that will serve as the tool through which the Chinese dream will be fulfilled. Moreover, the choice of the word "rejuvenation" is interesting: the Chinese counterpart 复兴 *fùxīng* 'rejuvenation' is composed by the characters 复 *fù* 'to return to an original state, to resume' and 兴 *xīng* 'prosper, prevail', hinting the Chinese Dream stands for a *restoration* and not a creation of national greatness, which thus obviously already occurred in past centuries.

Citizens are eager to return to a national good even if it means to endure some sacrifices. It's clear how history is key for the PRC, since its rhetoric once again is deeply intertwined with China's interpretation of the Century of Humiliation and historical consciousness (Wang 2013). It's also important to note that the adjective chosen to describe the rejuvenation is 伟大 *wěidà* 'great, mighty', which appears 35 times in all the speech, 20 of which in the narrative section. It characterizes both the Chinese national rejuvenation and the people's spirit. Once again, it must be noted that the narrative section displays many modal verbs conveying participant internal success and epistemic possibility or impossibility, like the double 能 *néng* 'manage, succeed' and 定 *dìng* 'surely, certainly' in (13): these types of modal verbs and the similar ones previously analysed in this rhetoric unit all focus on the concept of possibility, hence future success, and impossibility in terms of the country's improvement and progress.

(13) 山再高，往上攀，总能登顶；路再长，走下去，定能到达

shān zài gāo, wǎng shàng pān, zǒng néng dēngdǐng; lù zài chǎng, zǒu xià qù, dìng néng dàodá
 mountain more high, to up climb, eventually can get to the top; road more long, walk down go, definitely can arrive

'no matter how high a mountain is, if you keep climbing, you will reach the top; no matter how long a road is, if you keep walking, you will reach your destination'

3.4.3 TRANSITION TO ARGUMENTATION

Now, in the transition to argumentation part, Xi explains internal policy guidelines and the values of contribution and commitment to the supreme political organ the CCP, that his fellow deputies need to adhere to in order to bring to full fruition the Chinese Dream he just exhaustively talked about.

«同志们！有这样伟大的人民，有这样伟大的民族，有这样的伟大民族精神，是我们的骄傲，是我们坚定中国特色社会主义道路自信、理论自信、制度自信、文化自信的底气，也是我们风雨无阻、高歌行进的根本力量！

我国是工人阶级领导的、以工农联盟为基础的人民民主专政的社会主义国家，国家一切权力属于人民。我们必须始终坚持人民立场，坚持人民主体地位，虚心向人民学习，倾听人民呼声，汲取人民智慧，把人民拥护不拥护、赞成不赞成、高兴不高兴、答应不答应作为衡量一切工作得失的根本标准，着力解决好人民最关心最直接最现实的利益问题，让全体中国人民和中华儿女在实现中华民族伟大复兴的历史进程中共享幸福和荣光！»

« Comrades, having such great people, nation and ethos is our pride, our spiritual strength to keep the confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as well as the prime force to drive us forward in spite of all difficulties. China is a socialist country of people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class based on an alliance of workers and farmers; it is a country where all power of the state belongs to the people. We must base our efforts on the interests of the people, ensure the principal status of the people, humbly learn from the people, and heed to their needs and draw on their wisdom. We must ensure that it is the basic criterion of our work that whether we can gain people's backing, acceptance, satisfaction and approval. We must focus our efforts in addressing the most pressing, most immediate issues that concern the people the most. We must also ensure that all Chinese people could share the happiness and pride in the historic course of national rejuvenation. »

For the first time, the General Secretary uses a different term when appealing to the members of the National People's Congress: instead of fellow deputies, he refers to them as 同志们 *tóngzhìmen* 'comrades', which is a word full of meaning in Mandarin. According to the Xiandai Hanyu Cidian, 同志们 *tóngzhìmen* 'comrades' are individuals that belong to the same political party, who fight for a mutual aspiration and stand up for a specific cause. This is implied by the origin of the characters, 同 *tóng* 'same, alike, similar' and 志 *zhì* 'will, ideal, aspiration'. The political reference is obviously linked to Socialism and thanks to the rise of Communism in China, 同志们 *tóngzhìmen* 'comrades' became commonplace, but its meaning doesn't rule out the possibility of nationalist movements and of rightist figures like Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925) (Lonobile 2011: 79-80).

The people and their national pride are said to be fundamental and indispensable for both socialism with Chinese characteristics, which is again associated to the road metaphor through the word 道路 *dàolù* 'way, road' (Magagnin 2016: 355-356), and for China's enthusiastic march and advancement, which is described as 'unstoppable' with the formulaic expression 风雨无阻 *fēngyǔ-wú-zǔ* 'unstoppable'. Qi (2018: 71) believes Xi's political rhetorical tools, such as this one, have two benefits: they refine the audience's national identity, which becomes meaningful, intuitive and vivid because people feel closely connected to what is expressed, and they are crucial to obtain sophisticated political communication; furthermore, an appropriate use of metaphors in political speeches helps creating and moulding a patriotic discourse system and blueprint. In other words, the leader's words are both easy to understand, suggestive and also reach the hearts of people, resonating with them.

After listening to or reading the extract, it's clear the fundamental role citizens play in China, especially the farmers and the working class. An overall good political management and efficient behaviours are calculated from the Chinese level of happiness and satisfaction. Associated to this belief there is the Maoist concept of 人民民主专政 *rénmín mǐnzhǔ zhuānzhèng* 'People's democratic dictatorship' governed by, Xi says, a coalition of workers and farmers. The "People's democratic dictatorship" is predicated on the notion that the CCP advocates on the behalf of people and functions as their representative. The state also holds authority over and has the ability to use force against reactionary elements in order to maintain the proletariat's leadership. This idea automatically believes that the government must exercise dictatorial power in order to oppose imperialism and to avoid the Party from turning into a liberal democracy, which would mean prioritising the bourgeois' interests, ultimately leading to the creation of a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (Meisner 1999: 59-62).

The imperativeness to put the society in the first place is conveyed by the sense of necessity of the modal verb 必须 *bìxū* 'must'. Moreover, Zhuang and Li (2022: 5-7) explain that in Mandarin, modal verbs like the one in question assist the audience, in this case the Party, in how to enforce the speaker's plans, enhancing the dialogue between the two parts. The listeners thus become active participants of the discourse because these lexical elements build and underline a set of shared and justified intentions and understandings, since they are expressed with the implicit

presumption that the audience would experience speech in the same manner. Unity is not only found between Party cadres and the leader, but between 中华儿女 *Zhōnghuá érnǚ* ‘son and daughters of China’ as well. Fraternity and close relationships with each other’s, regardless of the ethnic minority, are again elements associated to the People’s Republic of China, which in turn becomes the mother of all Chinese people thanks to that connection. Lastly, it is important to concentrate on the notion of the people’s wisdom. Much of the Chinese folkloristic tradition is enshrined in the Chinese wisdom, of which the people are the main representatives, as it is based on Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, ancient currents of thought that characterise millenary folk culture, and is also grounded in non-religious origins, such as literature, or on the Soviet approach of the planned economy (Gallo 2011: 9-12). For this richness of diverse sources, the state should draw upon the people’s wisdom if it wants to prosper.

«各位代表!

人民有信心，国家才有未来，国家才有力量。中国特色社会主义进入了新时代，勤劳勇敢的中国人民更加自信自尊自强。中国这个古老而又现代的东方大国朝气蓬勃、气象万千，中国特色社会主义道路、理论、制度、文化焕发出强大生机活力，奇迹正在中华大地上不断涌现。我们对未来充满信心。

历史已经并将继续证明，只有社会主义才能救中国，只有坚持和发展中国特色社会主义才能实现中华民族伟大复兴。国内外形势正在发生深刻复杂变化，我国发展仍处于重要战略机遇期。我们具备过去难以想象的良好发展条件，但也面临着许多前所未有的困难和挑战。中国共产党第十九次全国代表大会描绘了决胜全面建成小康社会、开启全面建设社会主义现代化国家新征程、实现中华民族伟大复兴的宏伟蓝图。把蓝图变为现实，是一场新的长征。路虽然还很长，但时间不等人，容不得有半点懈怠。我们决不能安于现状、贪图安逸、乐而忘忧，必须不忘初心、牢记使命、奋发有为，努力创造属于新时代的光辉业绩! »

« Fellow deputies,

Only when people have faith, will the nation have a bright future and strength. Now socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, the hard-working, brave Chinese people have shown more confidence, self-respect and self-improvement. China, a nation in the East that is both ancient and modern, is full of vigor and undergoes great changes. The path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics have radiated with great vitality, while miracles keep happening in our land. We have full confidence in our future.

History has proven and will continue to prove that only socialism can save China and only by adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics will we realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Both China and the world are in the midst of profound and complex changes. China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development. We have a favorable development environment that was unimaginable before, but we still face unprecedented difficulties and challenges. At the 19th National Congress, the CPC has drawn up a splendid blueprint for securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, **embarking on a new journey** to fully build a modern socialist country and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It will be another Long March to materialize the blueprint. Although we have a long way to go, **we are left with limited time** and not allowed to be slack. We must not be satisfied with the status quo, indulge ourselves in ease and comfort, or let delight dispel worries. We must stay true to our original aspiration, hold on to our mission, strive to accomplish, so as to make outstanding achievement in the new era.»

(14) 人民有信心，国家才有未来，国家才有力量。

rénmín yǒu xìnxīn, guójiā cái yǒu wèilái, guójiā cái yǒu lìliàng.
population have faith, nation then have future, nation then have strength.

‘only when people have faith, will the nation have a bright future and strength.’

(15) 只有社会主义才能救中国，只有坚持和发展中国特色社会主义才能实现中华民族伟大复兴

zhǐyǒu shèhuìzhǔyì cáinéng jiù Zhōngguó, zhǐyǒu jiānchí hé fāzhǎn Zhōngguó

only socialism then can save China, only adhere and develop China

tèsè shèhuìzhǔyì cáinéng shíxiàn zhōnghuá mínzú wěidà fùxīng

characteristics socialism then can realize China nation great rejuvenation

‘only socialism can save China and only by adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics will we realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’ù

The sentences (14) and (15) contain the only possibility structure *zhǐyǒu ...cái néng* 只有...才能 ‘only if A then B’, which convey that Chinese faith and socialism are the only fundamental conditions in order to realize a solid future, national strength and the great rejuvenation. This grammatical structure is fixed, meaning that to convey this specific message of obligatory necessity, both parts, 只有 *zhǐyǒu* ‘only if A’ and 才能 *cái néng* ‘then B’, must be present (Yuan 2019: 559-564). It denotes both a sufficient and a necessary condition, which combines two kinds of hypothetical judgment. Therefore Xi, knowing the influence his persuasive words can have on the masses, states that his directives and the Chinese Dream can be achieved only when people rely on the Socialism with Chinese characteristics and completely trust him.

Faith, according to the speaker, springs from the PRC, which is described with the oxymoron 古老而又现代 *gǔlǎo ér yòu xiàndài* ‘ancient and modern’, but also with ‘full of vigor’, the *chengyu* 气象万千 *qìxiàng-wànqiān* ‘majestic’ and of course with its great miraculous achievements. Clearly, development is presented as a vicious cycle that requires trust in order to thrive and at the same time gives faith to the people that should bring it forward. The General Secretary then employs three lexical unit including the morpheme 自 *zì* ‘self, one’s own, oneself’, namely 自信自尊自强 *zìxìn zìzūn zìqiáng* ‘self-confidence, self-respect and self-improvement’. In this way, by catering to the audience and praising their qualities, he tries to create an overall sense of patriotic power and unity: with every single individual’s contribution not only can personal success be achieved, but the nation can also evolve.

Caring for the Chinese people and their needs, like it’s visible in this paragraph, proves again to be an effective technique for increasing popular support to the Party. First, when the leader is able to create a healthy and steady community, which can also benefit individual listeners, he will inevitably gain support and praise from the people, who will eventually identify with him. In order to create a collective feeling of social identity, which allows identification into a homogeneous group ready to follow the directives dictated by the socialist state, it is necessary to involve the citizens (Haslam, Platow 2001: 1477).

(16) 历史已经并将继续证明

lìshǐ yǐjīng bìng jiāng jìxù zhèngmíng

history already and will continue prove

‘history has proven and will continue to prove’

(17) 时间不等人

shíjiān bù děng rén
time not wait person
'time doesn't wait for people'

The President opts for multiple rhetoric figures to express meaningful messages about the validity of Chinese socialism and the constant need for further development, regardless of previous triumphs. Firstly, the sentence 'history has proven and will continue to prove' (16) is a personification, because the subject of the verb 证明 *zhèngmíng* 'to prove' are usually people. Nevertheless, here history is seen as real tangible evidence of China's accomplishments, which can always be mentioned to motivate people to keep doing their best, just like in the past. 'Time doesn't wait for people' (17) is also a personification that testifies that time transcends humankind and cannot be paused, therefore humanity cannot procrastinate. The denial of permission and impossibility are illustrated by the use of the modal verbs *bùdé* 不得 'not permit' and *bù néng* 不能 'cannot', conveying that one should always seize the moment, take risks or opportunities and absolutely not delay doing things.

Secondly, Xi utilizes several words and verbs to describe the metaphors for the CCP and its continuous quest, the domain of war and sacrifice. All these elements can be found in Magagnin's (2016: 356) already cited study and include 建成, 建设 *jiànchéng, jiànshè* 'build', implying that the Party will be the builder of a prosperous and socialist country, which are enshrined in the journey analogy given by the expression 'embark on a new journey' (18). The conceptual metaphors "the Party is an army" and "history is a battlefield" are supported by keywords such as 战略 *zhànlüè* 'war-plan, strategy', 面临 *miànlín* 'face to face, to be confronted with', 挑战 *tiǎozhàn* 'challenge' and 决胜 *juéshèng* 'to determine victory' and communicate to people and deputies that they must be ready to make sacrifices and fight for the nation to keep up its status.

(18) 开启...新征程

kāiqǐ... xīn zhēngchéng
begin new journey
'embark on a new journey'

However, the Chairman confesses that in order to realize his project, namely the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, everybody must embark on a 一场新的长征 *yī chǎng xīn de chángzhēng* 'new Long March'. It refers to the Long March occurred from October 1934 to October 1935 (Samarani 2008: 142-145), which from then has always been portrayed as one of the historical milestones of the Chinese Communist revolution. Further information about this historical event is offered in the intermediate conclusions.

3.4.4 PROCEDURAL ARGUMENTATION

In the procedural argumentation, the speech mentions again the past, which nevertheless has continued to be a crucial point and a cornerstone of the present day, showing that many old Party policies are still relevant in current times.

«我们要适应我国发展新的历史方位，紧扣我国社会主要矛盾的变化，高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜，全面贯彻党的十九大和十九届二中、三中全会精神，坚持以马克思列宁主义、毛泽东思想、邓小平理论、“三个代表”重要思想、科学发展观、新时代中国特色社会主义思想为指导，坚持稳中求进工作总基调，坚持以人民为中心的发展思想，统揽伟大斗争、伟大工程、伟大事业、伟大梦想，统筹推进“五位一体”总体布局，协调推进“四个全面”战略布局，奋力开创新时代中国特色社会主义事业新局面！

我们的目标是，到本世纪中叶把我国建成富强民主文明和谐美丽的社会主义现代化强国。

我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施全面深化改革、扩大对外开放，贯彻新发展理念，推动经济高质量发展，建设现代化经济体系，不断增强我国经济实力、科技实力、综合国力，让社会主义市场经济的活力更加充分地展示出来。

我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施发展社会主义民主，坚持党的领导、人民当家作主、依法治国有机统一，建设社会主义法治国家，推进国家治理体系和治理能力现代化，巩固和发展最广泛的爱国统一战线，确保人民享有更加广泛、更加充分、更加真实的民主权利，让社会主义民主的优越性更加充分地展示出来。

我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施加快建设社会主义文化强国，培育和践行社会主义核心价值观，推动中华优秀传统文化创造性转化、创新性发展，让中华文明的影响力、凝聚力、感召力更加充分地展示出来。」

«We should adapt ourselves to the new historic juncture for the development of our country, act in response to the evolution of the principal contradiction in Chinese society, uphold the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, fully implement the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress and the second and third plenary sessions of the 19th CPC Central Committee. We should follow the guide of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. We should remain committed to the underlying principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability, stick to the people-centered development vision, plan great struggle, great project, great cause, and great dream as a whole, ensure coordinated implementation of the five-sphere integrated plan, and the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, so as to break a new ground for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics for the new era.

Our goal is to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful by the middle of the century.

We will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in deepening reform in all areas, expanding opening up, applying a new vision of development, promoting high-quality economic development and developing a modernized economy to increase China's economic and technological strength, and composite national strength, **so as to better demonstrate** the vitality of the socialist market economy.

We will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in developing socialist democracy, upholding the unity of Party leadership, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance, building a country of socialist rule of law, promoting the modernization of China's system and capacity for governance, consolidating and developing the broadest possible patriotic united front, to ensure that people enjoy the democratic rights in a broader, fuller and more genuine way, **so as to better demonstrate** the strength of socialist democracy.

We will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in developing a great socialist culture in China, cultivating and observing core socialist values, and promoting the creative evolution and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture, **so as to better demonstrate** the influence of the Chinese civilization, and its power to unite and ability to inspire.»

Moreover, Xi Jinping stresses the concept of adaptation to new future, but without forgetting about how the great Chinese nation was forged and what it stands on. Since the biggest Asian country just entered a new era of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, it faces new difficulties. In fact, the government must react to what has been called the 我国社会主要矛盾 *wǒ guó shèhuì zhǔyào*

máodùn ‘principal contradiction of Chinese society’, which from Xi Jinping’s report at the 19th National Congress of the CCP (Xi 2017: 11) is defined as “the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life”. In order to lay the foundations for the new era of Socialism with Chinese, the Party must execute the 五位一体总体布局 *wǔ wèi yītǐ zǒngtǐ bùjú* ‘Five-Sphere Integrated Plan’ and the 四个全面战略布局 *sì gè quánmiàn zhànlüè bùjú* ‘Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy’, respectively first appeared during the 19th National Congress of the CCP and in 2014. In this address, these types of policies follow the verb 推进 *tuījìn* ‘advance, carry forward’: this rhetoric unit presents 6 occurrences (out of the total 8 of the speech) that also support other nouns like “modernization”, “construction” and “process”.

It’s fascinating to point out the numbers occurring in the extract, but most importantly how they are used. It’s not a mere coincidence that the numbers 3, 4 and 5 recur in specific proper nouns, such as the *Theory of Three Represents*, the *Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy* and the *Five-Sphere Integrated Plan*, because Guo and Gong (2019: 98-101) speculate that numbers are extremely important constitutive elements of Chinese political language. By utilising digits in slogans, the two researchers prove that political leaders have less chances of forgetting important facts and of transmuting meanings, therefore providing more stability and accuracy in their rhetoric. Moreover, since numbers are clear, they decrease the risks of distorted and out-of-shape information in the dissemination process. It is obvious that here the numbers function as easy-to-understand indicators of how many policies and main points must be followed and memorized by Party cadres and people.

(19) 我们的目标是，到本世纪中叶把我国建成富强民主文明和谐美丽的社会主义现代化强国。

Wǒmen de mùbiāo shì, dào běn shìjì zhōngyè bǎ wǒguó jiànchéng fùqiáng

1PL DE goal be, up to this century middle period BA China build prosperous and strong

mínzhǔ wénmíng héxié měilì de shèhuìzhǔyì xiàndàihuà qiángguó.

democratic civilized harmonious beautiful DE socialism modern strong country.

‘our goal is to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful by the middle of the century.’

Xi Jinping states (19) that the ultimate goal of his leadership is to transform China into a powerful nation before 2050, which coincides with the 100th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China. To highlight its rising reputation and allure, the adjectives chosen to describe China in the future are 富强 *fùqiáng* ‘prosperous and strong’, 民主文明 *mínzhǔ wénmíng* ‘democratic and culturally advanced’, 和谐 *héxié* ‘harmonious’ and 美丽 *měilì* ‘beautiful’. Based on Brown and Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018: 332-335)’s research article, these are Xi Jinping’s political keywords to reinforce his socialist principles. They affirm the adjective ‘prosperous and strong’ has commonly occurred in modern Chinese rhetoric, from the Qing dynasty, developing during the Republic of China to oppose to the Western humiliation to finally gaining its greatest aspirational meaning of

growth with Mao, Deng and, of course, Xi. 民主 *mínzhǔ* ‘democratic’ is a distinctive term, far from the values of what we know as “democracy”, because in fact China isn’t governed by a multitude of parties that at some degree share powers and possess two distinguished assemblies, but by a single party, the CCP, that serves its citizens and represents their powers. The same study explains that the keyword ‘culturally advanced’ is chosen to promote developments in civilization, which is based on a history of five millenniums, and in the quality of people, that otherwise would face potential backwardness on a national scale.

A more in-depth analysis must be done for the adjective 和谐 *héxié* ‘harmonious’. As said before, this ideal isn’t new to Chinese politicians, because it is strictly linked to Confucius and Mencius, who were also important authoritative figures in politics. Confucians considered harmony as a crucial value that unites nature with people and their happiness and Mencius cherished harmony among individuals as the key principle of social affairs. For both thinkers, it meant peace, hierarchy and order inside their society (Li 2008: 426). A harmonious life has also been a core principle in Hu Jintao’s leadership, since one of his goals consisted in readjusting China to the frenetic and materialistic lifestyle that rose during his predecessors. During his two terms, he fought for balance between his people, in the Party itself, for equal rights and possibilities between urban and rural geographical areas through the Scientific Outlook for Development, for environmental balance as well as harmony with worldwide countries (Leightner 2017:72-83). So, this harmonious equilibrium, which Xi Jinping is looking for, is very rich in meaning and carries with itself thousands of years of tradition and history, allowing the speech to multiply in symbolic aspects. In the present day, Brown and Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2018: 333) claim that 和谐 *héxié* ‘harmonious’ conveys equity to encourage community peace and cohesion, but also conformity, in order to abide to standards whenever someone doesn’t agree with CCP’s laws and values. The wording choice therefore results so meticulous and calculated that it seems impossible to fully reveal the leader’s true intentions.

In order to satisfy the goal of building China into a powerful nation, the aspects to be taken care of are multiple and the economy is definitely one to keep in mind. The excerpt clearly focuses on verbs and nouns about this topic: the leadership commits to put effort in 深化 *shēnhuà* ‘intensifying’, 扩大 *kuòdà* ‘expanding’ and 贯彻 *guànchè* ‘carrying out’ 改革 *gǎigé* ‘reforms’ so as to further develop the nation and open its economic interests to the outside world. These actions, and others which will be later discerned, are all determined by the adverb 全面 *quánmiàn* ‘in total’: by using it 4 times, it’s clear how these verbs and actions must be all executed comprehensively in order to produce excellent results for the nation. Xi moreover stresses the relevance of a 经济高质量发展 *jīngjì gāo zhìliàng fāzhǎn* ‘high-quality economic development’ and of a modern economic system in order to increasingly enhance three powers vital to China’s status, which are the 经济实力 *jīngjì shí lì* ‘economic strength’, 科技实力 *kējì shí lì* ‘scientific and technological strength’ and the 综合国力 *zònghé guó lì* ‘comprehensive national strength’.

The General Secretary repeats again the sentence (4) at the beginning of the paragraph and the construction (5) at the end: they convey a conative role² through the use of the first-person subject 我们 *wǒmen* ‘we’ combined with the modal verb *yào* 要 ‘will’ which, in 7 out of the 9 occurrences in this rhetoric section, conveys a participant external futurity and commitment meaning: only by taking accountability and assuming one's duties can an individual bring one own targets to fruition.

(20) 我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施发展社会主义民主，坚持党的领导

wǒmen yào yǐ gèng dà de lìdù, gèng shí de cuòshī fāzhǎn shèhuìzhǔyì
IPL will with more big DE strength, more true DE measures develop socialism
mínzhǔ, jiānchí dǎng de lǐngdǎo
democracy, uphold Party DE leadership

‘we will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in developing socialist democracy, upholding the unity of Party leadership’

(21) 人民当家作主

rénmín dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
people manage household make master
‘upholding the running of the country by the people’

The Chairman’s second objective for the new era is the development and consolidation of what is formalized as ‘socialist democracy’ (20), which can be achieved by adhering to the 坚持党的领导 *jiānchí dǎng de lǐngdǎo* ‘Party’s leadership’, in other words by letting the CCP take the lead, by upholding the running of the country by the people (21), which means giving power and 民主权利 *mínzhǔ quánlì* ‘democratic rights’ to the population, and by a 依法治国 *yīfǎ zhìguó* ‘law-based governance’. To specifically highlight the solidarity and sense of union between the State and people, Xi Jinping adopts the *chengyu* 当家作主 *dāng-jia-zuo-zhu* ‘to be in charge in one’s own house’, making clear the absolute power citizens hold. The conceptual metaphor of a close-knit community between the two is thus created, suggesting that “the Chinese nation is a house” and “the Chinese nation is a family” (Magagnin 2018: 360). The family’s central role in politics is a recurring theme in Chinese rhetoric since it started to gain acclaim with Confucius. Values of filial piety, that is to say obedience, order and obligation, keep being transplanted today to the political field and are used to legitimize power, because they link the government to the Confucian view of family through the sovereign-father parallelism.

² According to Jakobson, it consists in a function of communication in which the addresser (the speaker) tries to persuade or influence the recipient (the listener) to engage in specific demeanours. In JAKOBSON, Roman (2018). *Linguistica e poetica*. Milano: Ledizioni LediPublishing. First published in SEBEOK, Thomas A. (1960). *Style in Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts.: MIT Press.

Xi Jinping expands the socialist fil rouge by promising to improve the laws and governance of the Party, which is the originator of social order and guarantees its stability and calls on the people to 坚持 *jiānchí* ‘uphold’ the unity of consensus and conservation of power, that is, the unity of the Party leadership, hoping to create active participation in Chinese political life. In doing so, he mentions a fundamental concept of his Party, the 法治 *fǎzhì* ‘rule of law’ also known as the 依法治国 *yīfǎ zhìguó* ‘law-based governance’.

Another goal that stands out from the excerpt above is the consolidation of a 爱国统一战线 *àiguó tǒngyī zhànxiàn* ‘patriotic united front’, particularly because the concept has existed for over a century. Under pressing insistence from the Soviets, the Kuomintang or Chinese Nationalist Party, and the CCP joined forces in 1924 under what is today remembered as the First United Front (Samarani 2008: 123-124). By using this particular terminology, Xi Jinping not only highlights once more his country’s rich and long history, inciting and infusing patriotism and pride in the listeners, but the united front also creates a military metaphor that intertwines together all those parties which aren’t the CCP, in order to create a coalition against a possible enemy, ultimately helping the Communist government in the defence of the country (Gallelli 2013: 61-62).

(22) 我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施加快建设社会主义文化强国

wǒmen yào yǐ gèng dà de lìdù, gèng shí de cuòshī jiākuài jiànshè
IPL will with more big DE strength, more true DE measures quicken build
shèhuìzhǔyì wénhuà qiángguó
socialism culture strong country.

‘we will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in developing a great socialist culture in China’

Considering that the promotion of policies and reforms for an economic modernization was put into place during the Deng administration and has continued to transform the country during the Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao eras, Xi Jinping has understood the necessity to also push forward strategies that go beyond a mere economic rejuvenation but actually put a spotlight on the people’s harmony and stability (22). He talks about fostering and following 社会主义核心价值观 *shèhuì zhǔyì héxīn jiàzhíguān* ‘core socialist values’, which according to Liu Yunshan 刘云山 (1947-) “have inherited the excellent cultural traditions of the Chinese nation, are rooted in the successful practice of reform and opening up and embody the unique advantages of the Socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Pan 2014).³

³ From 2002 until 2012, Liu Yunshan was the head of the Publicity Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCPPD) and at the start of the Xi administration, he was the supervisor of Chinese propaganda as a new member of the Politburo Standing Committee (China Daily 2007).

The core socialist values are 富强 *fùqiáng* ‘prosperity’, 民族 *mínzú* ‘democracy’, 文明 *wénmíng* ‘civility’, 和谐 *héxié* ‘harmony’, 自由 *zìyóu* ‘freedom’, 平等 *píngděng* ‘equality’, 公正 *gōngzhèng* ‘justice’, 法治 *fǎzhì* ‘rule of law’, 爱国 *àiguó* ‘patriotism’, 敬业 *jìngyè* ‘dedication’, 诚信 *chéngxìn* ‘integrity’ and 友善 *yǒushàn* ‘friendship’: they can be divided into national, social and individual values and they all lie at the heart of the Chinese Dream (Gow 2017: 99). The author also elucidates that since they can determine both the country’s desires and the citizens’ expectations, they’re employed to foster a common identity, a socialist balance and the further consolidation of the Party, all elements that constitute a civil society in the eyes of the Chairman, so to ensure the deep and definitive settlement of political support.

The necessity to combine a development on all fronts with a focus on people’s lives is testified by the association of a 传统文化 *chuántǒng wénhuà* ‘traditional culture’ with an 创新性发展 *chuàngxīn xìng fāzhǎn* ‘innovative development’: the society to be sought after, through development, technological advancement and innovation, must be qualitatively advanced and efficient, but at the same time it must reiterate the traditional cultural principles that have improved the community’s wellbeing over the centuries, which results to be the next main topic of the speech.

«我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施保障和改善民生，加强和创新社会治理，坚决打赢脱贫攻坚战，促进社会公平正义，在幼有所育、学有所教、劳有所得、病有所医、老有所养、住有所居、弱有所扶上不断取得新进展，让实现全体人民共同富裕在广大人民现实生活中更加充分地展示出来。

我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施推进生态文明建设，加快形成绿色生产方式和生活方式，着力解决突出环境问题，使我们的国家天更蓝、山更绿、水更清、环境更优美，让绿水青山就是金山银山的理念在祖国大地上更加充分地展示出来。

我们要坚持党对人民军队的绝对领导，全面贯彻新时代党的强军思想，不断推进政治建军、改革强军、科技兴军、依法治军，加快形成中国特色、世界一流的武装力量体系，构建中国特色现代作战体系，推动人民军队切实担负起党和人民赋予的新时代使命任务。

我们要全面准确贯彻“一国两制”、“港人治港”、“澳人治澳”、高度自治的方针，严格依照宪法和基本法办事，支持特别行政区政府和行政长官依法施政、积极作为，支持香港、澳门融入国家发展大局，增强香港、澳门同胞的国家意识和爱国精神，维护香港、澳门长期繁荣稳定。我们要坚持一个中国原则，坚持“九二共识”，推动两岸关系和平发展，扩大两岸经济文化交流合作，同台湾同胞分享大陆发展的机遇，增进台湾同胞福祉，推进祖国和平统一进程。»

« **We will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in ensuring and improving people's living standards,** strengthening and developing new approaches to social governance, resolutely winning the battle against poverty, promoting social fairness and justice, making steady progress in ensuring people's access to childcare, education, employment, medical services, elderly care, housing, and social assistance, **so as to better demonstrate** the realization of common prosperity for everyone in people's real life.

We will devote more energy and take more concrete measures to advance the building of an ecological civilization, accelerate efforts to develop green production and ways of life, and work harder to tackle prominent environmental problems. We will make the skies of our country more blue, mountains more green, waters more clear and the environment more beautiful so that the concept that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets **is better demonstrated** on the great land of our country.

We will stick to the absolute leadership of the CPC over the people's armed forces and fully implement the Party's thinking on strengthening the military for the new era. We will continue to enhance the political loyalty of the armed forces, strengthen them through reform and technology, and run them in accordance with law. We will act more quickly to put into place the system of world-class armed forces with Chinese characteristics. We will create a modern combat system with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Our armed forces must be up to shouldering the missions and tasks of the new era entrusted to them by the Party and the people.

We will fully and faithfully implement the policies of "one country, two systems", "**the people of Hong Kong governing Hong Kong**", "**the people of Macao governing Macao**," and a high degree of autonomy for both regions. It is imperative to act in strict compliance with China's Constitution and the basic laws of the two special administrative regions. We will support the governments and chief executives of both regions in exercising law-based governance and pursuing endeavors. **We will support Hong Kong and Macao in integrating their own** development into the overall development of the country. We will foster greater patriotism and a stronger sense of national identity among the people in Hong Kong and Macao. We will maintain long lasting prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao. **We must uphold the one-China principle, stick to the 1992 Consensus**, promote peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and expand cross-Straits economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation. We are ready to share the development opportunities on the mainland with our Taiwan compatriots, improve the wellbeing of Taiwan compatriots and advance the process toward the peaceful reunification of China. »

The General Secretary announces another goal to bring to fruition in the next five years (23), the fulfilment of 共同富裕 *gòngtóng fùyù* 'common prosperity', which can be achieved through improvements of his compatriots' life and social justice. The policies every part of the population should receive benefits from revolve around tackling poverty and proving access to a variety of welfare services, like education, childcare, employment, elderly and social assistance, in regard to health issues as well, and better housing opportunities.

(23) 我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施保障和改善民生

wǒmen yào yǐ gèng dà de lìdù, gèng shí de cuòshī bǎozhàng hé
IPL will use more big DE strength, more true DE measures safeguard and
gǎishàn mínshēng
improve people's livelihood

'we will devote more energy and take more concrete measures in ensuring and improving people's living standards'

The leitmotiv of the speech now focuses on the environmental questions (24), pushing an agenda where communist cadres must treasure the importance of China's landscapes, their responsibility in developing 绿色生产方式和生活方式 *lǜsè shēngchǎn fāngshì hé shēnghuó fāngshì* 'green production methods and ways of life' as well as the settlement of 突出环境问题 *túchū huánjìng wèntí* 'prominent environmental problems'. Xi Jinping creates this sentiment by using the *chengyu* 绿水青山 *lǜshuǐ-qīngshān* 'beautiful scenery', one of the many rhetoric tools that convey the charm of China's diverse territories and the need to preserve them. All these actions must be implemented in order to build and refine an ecological civilization for both politicians and citizens, which hence should be synchronized with the economic growth and the popular harmony mentioned in the previous passages.

(24) 我们要以更大的力度、更实的措施推进生态文明建设

wǒmen yào yǐ gèng dà de lìdù, gèng shí de cuòshī tuījìn shēngtài
IPL will use more big DE strength, more true DE measures carry forward ecology

wénmíng jiànshè
civilization build

‘we will devote more energy and take more concrete measures to advance the building of an ecological civilization’

After expressing his intention to safeguard the national and global environment, Xi continues his discourse by mentioning one of the Party’s fundamental elements, the PLA (25):

(25) 我们要坚持党对人民军队的绝对领导，全面贯彻新时代党的强军思想

wǒmen yào jiānchí dǎng duì rénmin jūnduì de juéduì lǐngdǎo, quánmiàn guànchè
IPL will uphold Party at population army DE absolute leadership, overall carry out
xīn shídài dǎng de qiáng jūn sīxiǎng
new era Party DE strong military thought

‘we will stick to the absolute leadership of the CPC over the people's armed forces and fully implement the Party's thinking on strengthening the military for the new era’

In the procedural argumentation, through the repeated occurrence of the modal 要 yào ‘will’, expressing futurity and participant external necessity 7 times, the population is asked to show support and loyalty to the 人民解放军 rénmin jiěfàngjūn ‘People’s Liberation Army’, whose commander-in-chief is actually Xi Jinping himself, and in return it will become stronger and more up to date thanks to the comprehensive implementation of scientific research, professionalism and technological prowess. One feature of the military that Xi is keen to preserve is its Chinese identity highlighted by the remarks 中国特色 Zhōngguó tèsè ‘[with] Chinese characteristics’, distancing the PRC once again from anything that the Western countries offer. Regardless of this separation, by what can be caught from this part of the speech, the purpose of the modernisation of the PLA seems to be domestic defence and security, rather than offense. In fact, China’s objectives stem from peaceful intentions, desiring to maintain the grip over and contain national issues like maritime and border protection, terrorism and internal crime while showing to the international community a nonthreatening military policy, for instance with the engagement in various UN peacekeeping missions (Lanteigne 2019: 134-136).

This paragraph is dedicated to China’s internal diplomacy and its status in relation to the SARs of Hong Kong and Macao and the state of Taiwan. The method of governance in action in the two SARs is clarified from the beginning: the 一国两制 yīguóliǎngzhì ‘one country, two systems’ is the constitutional principle under which China rules Hong Kong and Macao. The arrangement gives these two cities a high degree of sovereignty, except in foreign affairs and defence matters, their own governments, legislatures and courts, which is made clear with the symmetrical sentences ‘the people of Hong Kong governing Hong Kong, the people of Macao governing Macao’ (26), as well as their own currencies.

(26) 港人治港、澳人治澳

gǎngrén zhì gǎng, àorén zhì ào

Hong Kong-person rule Hong Kong, Macao-person rule Macao

‘the people of Hong Kong governing Hong Kong, the people of Macao governing Macao’

Even though their systems provide more freedom, nonetheless the leader is still asking to respect the Chinese Constitution and laws, so that China can support Hong Kong and Macao in integrating into the overall development of the country (27), meaning that if both respect and comply with the Chinese governance, China in return will help their economies with further commercial exchanges, ultimately emanating long lasting prosperity and stability (长期繁荣稳定 *chángqí fánróng wěndìng*).

(27) 支持香港、澳门融入国家发展大局

zhīchí xiānggǎng, àomén róng rù guójiā fāzhǎn dàjú

support Hong Kong, Macao blend into country develop overall

‘support Hong Kong and Macao in integrating into the overall development of the country’

In the passage in question, Xi also spends few words on Taiwan, also named the Republic of China from 1949, after the Kuomintang captained by Chiang Kai-shek 蒋介石 (1887-1975) lost the Chinese Civil War and retreated to the island to find rescue. Since then, Taiwan has always asserted its self-rule and autonomy and operates independently from the mainland with its own government, military, and constitution (Samarani 2008, 374-375).

(28) 我们要坚持一个中国原则，坚持“九二共识”

wǒmen yào jiānchí yī gè Zhōngguó yuánzé, jiānchí “jiǔ’èr gòngshì”

1PL must uphold one CLF China principle, uphold “‘92 consensus”

‘we must uphold the one-China principle, stick to the 1992 Consensus’

The policies to be adopted are the ‘one-China principle’ and the ‘1992 Consensus’ (28), which is accepted by both Beijing and Taipei. In this part, the Secretary is calling Chinese citizens for friendly relations with and steady support to these disputed areas, asking them to show solidarity through the use of very diplomatic adjectives, nouns and verbs such as 两岸关系和平发展 *liǎng'àn guānxì héping fāzhǎn* ‘peaceful development of cross-strait relations’, 文化交流合作 *jiāoliú hézuò* ‘exchanges and cooperation’, 分享机遇 *fēnxiǎng jīyù* ‘share opportunities’, 福祉 *fúzhǐ* ‘well-being’ and 统一 *tǒngyī* ‘reunification’. Xi Jinping refers to a peaceful development, which deeply is intertwined with the other objectives of China's international politics, the notions

of peace and non-interference. Collaboration between China, Macao, Hong Kong and Taiwan should be employed to protect and advance every subject's security and common interests, as well as promote amicable and long-lasting ties. The feeling of unity that should exist between people of these areas is well described with the noun 同胞 *tóngbāo* 'same-placenta, compatriot': Gallelli (2013: 56-57) explains that the second character, 胞 *bāo* 'placenta', means placenta, implying that all compatriots from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao were born from the same mother, China, and thus share common origins and a strong brotherhood with Chinese people. Magagnin (2016: 360) agrees that the word compatriot represents the conceptual metaphor "the Chinese nation is a family", portraying harmony and peace among people that consider themselves of Chinese lineage. The same concept of "the Chinese nation is a family" is also repeated in the next section, the hortatory argumentation.

3.4.5 HORTATORY ARGUMENTATION

With this rhetoric unit, the discourse is starting to approach to the end. One big difference with the previous section is that here, as it can be seen in the following passages, futurity is not presented by means of *yào* 要 'will', but by means of another modal verb and its negative form: 会 *huì* 'will' and 不会 *búhuì* 'will not'. The second occurrence of 会 *huì* 'might', found in example (35), also conveys the reading of epistemic inference and deduction and can be translated with 'might'.

«维护国家主权和领土完整，实现祖国完全统一，是全体中华儿女共同愿望，是中华民族根本利益所在。在这个民族大义和历史潮流面前，一切分裂祖国的行径和伎俩都是注定要失败的，都会受到人民的谴责和历史的惩罚！中国人民有坚定的意志、充分的信心、足够的力量挫败一切分裂国家的活动！中国人民和中华民族有一个共同信念，这就是：我们伟大祖国的每一寸领土都绝对不能也绝对不可能从中国分割出去！

各位代表！

我们生活的世界充满希望，也充满挑战。中国人民历来富有正义感和同情心，历来把自己的前途命运同各国人民的前途命运紧密联系在一起，始终密切关注和无私帮助仍然生活在战火、动荡、饥饿、贫困中的有关国家的人民，始终愿意尽最大努力为人类和平与发展作出贡献。中国人民这个愿望是真诚的，中国决不会以牺牲别国利益为代价来发展自己，中国发展不对任何国家构成威胁，中国永远不称霸、永远不搞扩张。只有那些习惯于威胁他人的人，才会把所有人都看成是威胁。对中国人民为人类和平与发展作贡献的真诚愿望和实际行动，任何人都不应该误读，更不应该曲解。人间自有公道在！»

« It is the shared aspiration of all Chinese people and in the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and realize China's complete reunification. In front of the great national interests and the tide of history, **any actions and tricks to split China are doomed to fail**. They are certain to meet with the people's condemnation and the punishment by the history. The Chinese people have the resolve, the confidence, and the ability to defeat secessionist attempts in any form! The Chinese people and the Chinese nation share a common belief that **it is never allowed and it is absolutely impossible to separate any inch of territory of our great country from China!**

Fellow deputies,

The world we live in is full of hope and full of challenges. The Chinese people have always had the sense of justice and compassion. The Chinese people have always tied their destiny closely to that of the people around the world. The Chinese people have always paid close attention and provided unselfish assistance to people who still live in war, turmoil, hunger, and poverty. **The Chinese people are always ready to do their utmost to contribute to the peace and development of humanity.** This wish of the Chinese people is sincere. **China will never pursue development at the expense of others' interests. China's development does not pose a threat to any other country.** China will never seek hegemony or engage in expansion. **Only those who are accustomed to threatening others see everyone as a threat.** The Chinese people's

sincere wish and practical action to contribute to the peace and development of humanity should not be misinterpreted, nor should they be distorted. Justice will prevail!»

As noted above, the marking of futurity in hortatory argumentation is different from that in procedural argumentation. Such a shift is possibly due to the different modal meaning: in the procedural section, the phrase 我们要 *wǒmen yào* ‘we will’ is repeated 7 times with a reading of a personal “commitment to the future (a meaning that somehow encompasses the deontic and futurity readings)” (Sparvoli and Romagnoli 2023: 315). In the hortatory argumentation, there is no deontic nuance, no reference to a duty, but rather to the (un)certainly of actualization of a given state-of-affairs; the speaker assesses that the 中国将 *Zhōngguó jiāng* ‘China will’ using the adverb *jiāng*, repeated 3 times; for claiming that 中国决不会 *Zhōngguó jué búhuì* ‘China will never’, the modal 会 *huì* ‘will’ is used, emphasized by the negative adverb 绝(对)不 *jué(duì) bù* ‘absolutely not’, as in (29). A similar negative assessment is expressed in (30).

(29) 中国决不会以牺牲别国利益为代价来发展自己

Zhōngguó jué búhuì yǐ xīshēng bié guó lìyì wèi dàijià lái fāzhǎn zìjǐ
China definitely won't use sacrifice other country benefit for cost in order to
develop oneself

‘China will never pursue development at the expense of others' interests’

30) 祖国的每一寸领土都绝对不能也绝对不可能从中国分割出去

zǔguó de měi yī cùn lǐngtǔ dōu juéduì bùnéng yě juéduì bùkěnéng
homeland DE every one CLF territory all absolute cannot also absolute impossible
cóng Zhōngguó fēngē chūqù
from China divide CHUQU

‘it is never allowed and it is absolutely impossible to separate any inch of territory of our great country from China!’

As previously analysed, citizens are frequently referred to as ‘son and daughters of China’ to highlight a big inclusive Chinese family (Link 2013: 201) that strives for China’s 国家主权 *guójiā zhǔquán* ‘national sovereignty’, 领土完整 *lǐngtǔ wánzhěng* ‘territorial integrity’ and as mentioned before 完全统一 *wánquán tǒngyī* ‘complete reunification’. Harmony and unity, which are also conveyed by the sentence (30), are essential elements for reaching these goals and therefore must be nurtured and protected through one’s own 意志 *yìzhì* ‘will’, 信心 *xìnxīn* ‘confidence’ and 能力 *nénglì* ‘ability’. It’s interest to note that the adverbs and modal verbs chosen for this sentence, 绝对不能也绝对不可能 *juéduì bùnéng yě juéduì bùkěnéng* ‘absolutely not and absolutely impossible’, convey the strong impossibility of the actualization of such state-of-affairs, that is,

the separation of China. More explicit prohibitions of actions addressed to external actors are instead presented twice by the use of the modal verb 不应该 *bù yīnggāi* ‘shouldn’t’ (32).

(31) 一切分裂祖国的行径和伎俩都是注定要失败的

yī qiē fēnliè zǔguó de xíngjìng hé jìliǎng dōu shì zhùdìng yào shībài de
one CL split homeland DE action and trick all be doomed must fail DE
‘any actions and tricks to split China are doomed to fail’

(32) 不应该误读

bù yīnggāi wùdú
not should misinterpret
‘should not be misinterpreted’

Xi Jinping opts for a vocabulary that resorts to war verbs like 注定要失败 *zhùdìng yào shībài* ‘be defeated’ (31) and 挫败 *cuòbài* ‘defeat’, in order to remember that national sovereignty and territorial integrity will always be pursued regardless of the situation. The leader in the hortatory argumentation also would like to point out that people should not only care for national unity, but for international solidarity as well (33):

(33) [中国人]始终愿意尽最大努力为人类和平与发展作出贡献。

[Zhōngguó rén] shǐzhōng yuànyì jìn zuìdà nǚlì wéi rénlèi hépíng
[China people] all along wish try one’s best biggest try hard for humanity peace
yǔ fāzhǎn zuòchū gòngxiàn.
and develop put out contribution.
‘the Chinese people are always ready to do their utmost to contribute to the peace and development of humanity.’

He expresses that since Chinese people are blessed with great sense of 正义感和同情心 *zhèngyìgǎn hé tóngqíngxīn* ‘justice and compassion’, they’ve always been ready to lend a helping hand in cases of difficult conditions, famine, social instability and other economic, internal and political problems and they’ve always been ready to do their best to contribute to human peace and development. Xi wants to reassure the listeners, and the whole world, that his country doesn’t possess ill will or a hidden agenda for the purpose of developing itself at the expense of others (29), threatening any other country (34), 称霸 *chēngbà* ‘seeking hegemony’ and 搞扩张 *gǎo kuòzhāng* ‘engaging in expansion’.

(34) 对任何国家构成威胁

duì rèn hé guó jiā gòu chéng wēi xié
concerning any country compose menace
'threatening any other country'

Furthermore, without naming names, the speaker criticises other international public opinions, that put forward the China threat theory, saying that 'only those who are accustomed to threatening others see everyone as a threat' (35). It's interesting to analyse the choice of wording here: to stress on this threat concept, the scope adverb 都 *dōu* 'all' and the adjective 所有 *suǒ yǒu* 'all' are combined in the same sentence and perfectly highlight that everyone can be seen as a menace by those who only focus on negativity.

(35) 只有那些习惯于威胁他人的人，才会把所有人都看成是威胁

zhǐ yǒu nà xiē xí guàn yú wēi xié tā rén de rén, cái huì bǎ suǒ yǒu
only those accustomed to menace others DE person, then be likely to BA all
rén dōu kàn chéng shì wēi xié
person all see become be menace
'only those who are accustomed to threatening others see everyone as a threat'

After this brief excursus, the President rapidly brings the attention back on justice and international unity.

«中国将继续高举和平、发展、合作、共赢的旗帜，始终不渝走和平发展道路、奉行互利共赢的开放战略。中国将继续积极维护国际公平正义，主张世界上的事情应该由各国人民商量着办，不会把自己的意志强加于人。中国将继续积极推进“一带一路”建设，加强同世界各国的交流合作，让中国改革发展造福人类。中国将继续积极参与全球治理体系变革和建设，为世界贡献更多中国智慧、中国方案、中国力量，推动建设持久和平、普遍安全、共同繁荣、开放包容、清洁美丽的世界，让人类命运共同体建设的阳光普照世界！

各位代表！

中国共产党领导是中国特色社会主义最本质的特征，中国共产党是国家最高政治领导力量，是实现中华民族伟大复兴的根本保证。东西南北中，党政军民学，党是领导一切的。全国各党派、各团体、各民族、各阶层、各界人士要紧密团结在党中央周围，增强“四个意识”，坚定“四个自信”，万众一心向前进。

中国共产党要担负起领导人民进行伟大社会革命的历史责任，必须勇于进行自我革命，坚持立党为公、执政为民，深入推进全面从严治党，坚决扫除一切消极腐败现象，始终与人民心心相印、与人民同甘共苦、与人民团结奋斗，永远保持马克思主义执政党本色，永远走在时代前列，永远做中国人民和中华民族的主心骨！»

« **China will continue to hold high the banner** of peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit. China will stay on the path of peaceful development, and continue to pursue a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. **China endeavors to uphold international fairness and justice.** China advocates that all issues in the world should be settled through consultation among people around the world, and will not impose its will on others. **China will continue to actively push forward the Belt and Road Initiative, and strengthen its exchanges and cooperation with countries around the world to let China's reform and development benefit humanity. China will continue to actively participate in the evolution and construction of the global governance system.** China will contribute more Chinese wisdom, Chinese solutions and

Chinese strength to the world, to **push for building an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity. Let the sunshine of a community with a shared future for humanity illuminate the world!**

Fellow deputies,

The leadership of the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Party is the highest force for political leadership and the fundamental guarantee of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The Party exercises overall leadership over all areas of endeavor in every part of the country. All political parties, people's organizations, ethnic groups and people of all sectors across the country **should rally closely around the CPC Central Committee**, enhance the "Four Consciousnesses," strengthen the "Four Confidences," and march forward with one heart and one mind.

To shoulder the historic responsibility of leading the people in the great social revolution, the Communist Party of China must have the courage to reform itself, adhere to the Party's commitment to serving the public good and exercising power in the interests of the people, step up strict governance over the Party, resolutely clear all types of inaction and corruption, always have a heart-to-heart communion with the people, always share the comforts and hardships with the people, always work hard together with the people, always preserve the character of a Marxist governing party, always remain ahead of the time, and always be the backbone of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation!»

Paradoxically, terms regarding the military field like the sentence ‘hold high the banner’ (36), the noun 战略 *zhànlüè* ‘strategy’ and the verb 维护 *wéihù* ‘protect’ (Magagnin 2016: 357) are chosen to promote concepts which are diametrically opposite to war, such as international 和平 *héping* ‘peace’, 发展 *fāzhǎn* ‘development’, 合作 *hézuò* ‘cooperation’ and 共赢 *gòngyíng* ‘mutual benefit’. The willingness and effort to implement policies in order to advance these global concepts are highlighted by the repetition of the 3-items Ngrams ‘China will continue to’ (6), which appears four times and thus strengthens even more PRC’s endeavours into human solidarity and worldwide partnerships, especially when coupled with the adverb 积极 *jījí* ‘actively’ in its three out of the total four occurrences of the speech.

(36) 高举...旗帜

gāojǔ... qízhì

high-hold...flag

‘hold high the banner of...’

The Secretary affirms that China will participate in the evolution and construction of the global governance system (37). To Zhou and Esteban (2018: 489-500) the so-called evolution, which is pushed forward by the Belt and Road Initiative, seems more of a serious revision of the international order, aimed at giving more space and attention to the Chinese model, status quo and values, in other words aimed at creating a fairer and more encompassing worldwide governance. With the help of the AIIB, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the BRI claims it will reshape the rules governing the world and will establish a 人类命运共同体 *rénlèi mìngyùn gòngtóngtǐ* ‘community with a shared future for humanity’. Notwithstanding the fact that this project promotes peaceful cooperation, they have been fairly criticized of engulfing less developed participants into a loan and debt trap, of major construction mistakes in their ventures as well as using the BRI resources for military purposes (Clark 2023).

(37) 积极参与全球治理体系变革和建设

jījī cānyù quánqiú zhīlǐ tǐxì biàngé hé jiànshè
active participate whole world govern system transformation and construct
'actively participate in the evolution and construction of the global governance system'

Regardless of the accusations, China and Xi Jinping won't stop believing in the initiative, in its goals, in its commercial, cultural and physical benefits, such as the people-to-people connectivity, and in its overall success that will shape a clean and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security, common prosperity, openness and inclusiveness (38). Xi conveys this ultimate aim of better society by choosing an analogy linked to the sun and light, 'let the sunshine illuminate the world' (39). The use of such tools is not new to rhetorical discourse, because they can be found in classical Greek texts: ancient philosophers frequently associated light to the act of living and to life itself (Ercolani 2019), and as such, the Chinese leader might be having the same associations, trying to instil life and progress into the community he speaks so highly about.

(38) 推动建设持久和平、普遍安全、共同繁荣、开放包容、清洁美丽的世界

tuīdòng jiànshè chǐjiǔ héping, pǔbiàn ānquán, gòngtóng fánróng, kāifàng bāoróng, qīngjié
promote build lasting peace, universal safety, common flourishing, open inclusive, clean
měilì de shìjiè
beautiful DE world
'clean and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security, common prosperity, openness and inclusiveness'

(39) 让人类命运共同体建设的阳光普照世界!

ràng rénlèi mìngyùntǐ gòngtóngtǐ jiànshè de yángguāng pǔzhào shìjiè!
let humanity destiny community build DE sunshine shine on world!
'let the sunshine of a community with a shared future for humanity illuminate the world!'

The speech then starts to approach its conclusion, where the situation is again assessed: Xi Jinping once again states the key role the CCP has in China and in its political life, saying that the overall organization is the driving force of the socialism with Chinese characteristics and that it is going to accomplish and fulfil the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Moreover, it has the important task of rallying together, guiding and aiding the population, which in turn is going to closely unite around the Party Central Committee (40) with one heart and one mind (万众一心 *wàn-zhòng-yī-xīn*). Beijing is constantly trying to favour communal unity and solidarity in its population, here for example with the use of the idiom 万众一心 *wàn-zhòng-yī-xīn* 'united together', in order to portrait a picture in which both ways of living coexist, where citizens can contribute to national prosperity and growth without cancelling out their personal gains.

(40) 紧密团结在党中央周围

jǐnmì tuánjié zài dǎng zhōngyāng zhōuwéi
close together unite stay party central committee surroundings
'closely unite around the Party Central Committee'

The speech continues with a list of actions that should be taken in order to have a proper Party-people relationship: in order to guide citizens to the social revolution and be their backbone, the Chinese leader through the use of the modal anankastic verbs 必须 *bìxū* 'must' and 要 *yào* 'must' needs the Party to be strong enough and not fear its reformation, which thus is considered a positive element, to make people the first priority, be responsible for them and for every single aspect that is linked to them. To convey the willingness and perseverance of realizing these wishes, Xi employs the adverb 始终 *shǐzhōng* 'from beginning to end', the adverb 永远 *yǒngyuǎn* 'always' three times (out of the total five occurrences, all located in this rhetoric section), while uses the *chengyu* 心心相印 *xīn-xīn-xiāng-yìn* 'feel a mutual affinity' and 同甘共苦 *tóng-gān-gòng-kǔ* 'share comforts and hardships' to explicit the strong accord between the two parts, which are going to cherish every common joy together and support one another during sorrowful times.

3.4.6 SPEECH CONCLUSION

In the conclusion, the speech ends with a quotation from the philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹's (1130-1200) poem 春日 *Chūn Rì* 'Spring Day'.

«各位代表!

“等闲识得东风面，万紫千红总是春。”在中国共产党领导下，经过近 70 年奋斗，我们的人民共和国茁壮成长，正以崭新的姿态屹立于世界东方!

新时代属于每一个人，每一个人都是新时代的见证者、开创者、建设者。只要精诚团结、共同奋斗，就没有任何力量能够阻挡中国人民实现梦想的步伐!

我们要乘着新时代的浩荡东风，加满油，把稳舵，鼓足劲，让承载着 13 亿多中国人民伟大梦想的中华巨轮继续劈波斩浪、扬帆远航，胜利驶向充满希望的明天! »

«Fellow deputies,

As an old Chinese poem goes, "When I glance at the visage of vernal breeze, I know that a thousand flowers of purple and red set spring aglow." After nearly seven decades of hard work under the leadership of the CPC, our people's republic has been growing vigorously, and with an entirely new posture, **it now stands tall and firm in the East.**

The new era belongs to everyone, and we are all its witnesses, creators and builders. No force can stop Chinese people's march toward realizing their dreams as long as we unite as one and strive together!

We should **ride on the mighty driving force of the new era with full steam, steady helmsmanship** and strong morale. The giant steamer of Chinese nation bearing the great dreams of the 1.3-billion-plus Chinese people hence will keep summoning difficulties and forging ahead, and **setting sail for a long voyage** into a future full of hopes successfully! »

The focus of the sentence is the rebirth of the spring flowers, two concepts, rebirth and spring, that Link (2013: 152) says are usually associated together to convey new vigour into something, which in this case is the 崭新的姿态 *zhǎnxīn de zītài* ‘new stance’ of China. In fact, it now stands tall and firm in the East (41), meaning that the country has acquired new assertiveness and visibility in the Asian arena (Bērziņa-Čerenkova 2020: 161) after following CCP policies for decades. Xi not only praises the Party, but also the citizens of the PRC, who made possible its rise and success. They are again called the ‘creator of the new era’ and are asked to sail for a long voyage (42) towards a promising tomorrow, or rather to fulfil Chinese dreams, projects and future prospects without surrendering to hardships along the process. He ends the speech by employing a fuller maritime terminology, that is the sentence ‘ride on the mighty driving force with full steam and steady helmsmanship’ (43) and the token adjectives-noun 中华巨轮 *zhōnghuá jùlún* ‘Chinese large ship’, to emphasize one last time the need to progress and sail into a future full of hopes.

(41) 屹立于世界东方

yìlì yú shìjiè dōngfāng
stand erect at world East
‘stands tall and firm in the East’

(42) 扬帆远航

yángfān yuǎnháng
set sail long haul-voyage
‘sail for a long voyage’

(43) 乘着浩荡东风，加满油，把稳舵

chéngzhe hàodàng dōngfēng, jiāmǎn yóu, bǎ wěn duò
ride-ZHE vast and mighty east wind, top up oil, BA steady helm
‘ride on the mighty driving force with full steam and steady helmsmanship’

3.5 INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS

After an in-depth qualitative analysis, this part will highlight all the critical political elements, values, context, goals, means and actions of Xi’s 2nd inaugural speech, held in March 2018 at the first session of the 13th NPC. It involves China’s internal situation, its context, goals and means to achieve them, with a focus on the Chinese Dream, the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and the relations with Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Moreover, it also better dissects China’s stance in the international community and its cultural, philosophical and historical values that permeate modern Chinese concerns.

3.5.1 DOMESTIC SITUATION AND MEANS TO REACH THE GOALS

The President from the very beginning of the address makes clear that he, and the rest of the citizens, must assume accountability in order to accomplish the desired future state of affairs, the Chinese glorious mission or Chinese Dream: as believed by Stenslie and Gang (2016: 125), it concerns national prosperity and rejuvenation, collective happiness and becoming a leading country in the global economic and military fields. The intellectual Kuhn (2013) states that the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation has two phases: the objective to become by 2020, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the CCP, a “moderately well-off society”, where everybody enjoys high standards of living, and the full development of a modern nation by 2049, which would be the 100th anniversary of the PRC. As Stenslie and Gang (2016: 123) explain, the core of the doctrine is collective pride, growing welfare and national restoration, in order to give the citizens happiness and a more essential role in their country. Furthermore, another goal of the glorious mission is the fight against corruption to benefit both the politicians and the normal citizens: as already said, during his first mandate, Xi Jinping launched the campaign known as 打虎拍蝇 *dǎhǔ pāiyíng* ‘killing tigers and swatting flies’, aimed at solving malfeasance and corruption, resulting in the prosecution of more than 4 million members as of 2022 (Reddy 2022).

To realize the Chinese Dream, the discourse mentions two policies ought to be implemented. The Ministry of Justice of the PRC reports that the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan should involve the construction of a solid economy, the progress of a socialist democratic governance, should endorse a better socialist culture to a more peaceful socialist community and lastly should promote developments in the ecological field (Ministry of Justice official website 2022). The five spheres thus concern the political, social, cultural, environmental and economic domains. Moreover, to solve any additional problem or difficulty China could face, deputies must also follow the Four Comprehensives, that is comprehensively build the moderately prosperous society above mentioned while comprehensively deepening reforms, governing the country according to the law and strictly governing the Party, which means that the crucial objective of this fourth comprehensive is to cultivate a solid regime for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics (Tao 2020).

These actions with Chinese characteristics are part of a larger economic model denominated by foreign scholars the 北京共识 *Běijīng gòngshì* ‘Beijing Consensus’. Even if the term was only coined in 2004, it encompasses all economic policies from Deng Xiaoping to today that helped China establish itself as an economic superpower. Lanteigne (2019: 60-63) explains this model stands diametrically opposite to the neo-liberal economic system known as the Washington Consensus, because in fact while the Western concept discourages state intervention in a country’s economy in order to keep the markets totally free, China’s model endorses great party control over it, incremental reforms and authoritarianism. Xi Jinping’s reforms will also strictly control e-commerce businesses, remodel and assimilate a variety of state-owned companies to create larger and more competitive corporations, also as known as “national champions”, that will nevertheless be still supervised and governed by the Chinese leadership (Parker 2018).

The concept of 共同富裕 *gòngtóng fùyù* ‘common prosperity’, which, as said, is part of the wider objective of the development of a modern Chinese society by mid-century, has received mixed feelings from the Western world. Some, like Dexter Tiff Roberts (2021, cit. in Xin 2022: 6-7), believe that it is used to actually end injustices between the rich and the poor and to gain political consensus in a time that already faces multiple challenges, while others think that the main reason to promote this shared wealth isn’t really to improve China’s living standards, meaning that people’s inequalities aren’t truly the government’s first concern, but is necessary to further pool and invigorate political and economic control under CCP’s supervision (Xin 2022: 6-7).

Another critic of China’s internal politics concerns the ‘principal contradiction of Chinese society’ seen in the qualitative analysis. Mittelstaedt (2017: 5-7) explains that considering that society has kept up with the economic evolution of the nation, it eventually changed to the point of needing new diverse commodities and public services for a better well-being, like security, social governance, demands for democracy as well as a fair development between different geographical regions. Only when the discrepancy between these two fundamental requirements is solved, will China enter the new phase of Chinese Socialism.

Let’s now highlight an important element of internal Chinese affairs cited by the general Secretary. First, the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held from the 18th to the 24th of October 2017 and, as the previous summits, is pivotal for the officialization of the main objectives of the following five years, for leadership changes and for general reports about the achievements since the last Party Congress (Albert 2017). Other than promoting further internal economic directives and expanding international influence, the blueprint to capture new victories mentioned by Xi Jinping includes the reinforcement of military modernization and national defence, especially through the application of the *One China principle* and the *1992 Consensus* in Taiwan case, and additional autonomy and cooperation between Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China, but without completely ruling out the latter’s authority over the two Special Administrative Regions (Gao 2017). This specific meeting will forever be remembered because it permanently brought to light Xi’s intentions of a very strict personalistic leadership, by abolishing the institutionalization process started with Deng Xiaoping, by erasing rivals and by failing to appoint his successor for the next term. Susan L. Shirk (2018) explains that the process culminated during the CCP 19th National Congress resulted from a variety of ineffective decentralization policies from the past, i.e. the unwritten rules deciding upon the leadership turnover, the vagueness of authority or poor issues management under Hu Jintao.

3.5.2 HONG KONG, MACAU AND TAIWAN QUESTIONS

Another constant interest of the CCP is China’s situation concerning Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. As briefly explained in the qualitative analysis, the two SARs are ruled by the policy ‘one country, two systems’, proposed by Deng Xiaoping in 1979. It was initially meant for Taiwan but never caught on with its population, so it was rescued ensuring a smooth transition after Great Britain handed the colony of Hong Kong back to the PRC in 1997, just like Portugal would do with Macao two years later (BBC News 2022). Preferential treatments were instituted for both SARs during Deng’s Open Door Policy, kick-starter of an unprecedented economic deregulation and opening up, hoping to lure inside foreign capital, investment, and technological expertise that

would lead to remarkable economic expansion and industrialization. These special strategies were initially a bet, which turned out successful thanks to multiple financial decisions throughout the years, guiding Hong Kong and Macao into wealthy commercial relationships, a solid economic structure and an active international diplomacy (Wang and Liang 2004: 3-10). Today, residents of these two cities have rights that people on the Chinese mainland do not enjoy, such as the freedom of assembly and free speech: the system guaranteeing these rights, the one country, two systems method, is supposed to remain unchanged for 50 years from the handover, marking 2047 and 2049 as the years in which the two special economic regions will be fully re-integrated with Beijing.

For Taiwan's issue, Xi wants to uphold the one-China principle, which asserts that the ROC is China's inalienable territory (Goldstein 2023), and the 1992 consensus. The latter is accepted by both Beijing and Taipei and expresses that both Mainland China and the island of Taiwan form a single and united China, but its interpretations vary: in fact, for the CCP which, as said in the analysis, wants a 'peaceful reunification' of its territories, the "one China" is constituted by the PRC, whereas the Chinese Nationalist Party considers the "one China" as the ROC (Wang *et al.* 2018). Regardless of which voice one prefers to hear, both powers agree that "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" don't exist, meaning that Taiwan feels as much Chinese as the Mainland. Both parties recognise the 1992 Consensus as the basis for pursuing further economic developments and political negotiations, even though both policies have different and conflicting claims of sovereignty and authority (Norton 2016).

3.5.3 INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Although, as explained throughout this chapter, the Chinese Dream is mainly about pursuing domestic goals, it is also introduced abroad as a great chance for growth, not only for China but for the whole world. A remarkable example of Chinese global solidarity has taken place in Africa, where diplomatic and development schemes are symbols of an efficient soft power agenda. Fiori and Rosen (2019: 193-195) prove how China has succeeded in transforming Africa from a hopeless continent to a vessel for economic investments: by stationing great amounts of troops in different African countries as a method to prevent civil war, by improving public health systems, by developing infrastructures such as railways, sports facilities and a better telecommunication sector, and overall, by increasing Sino-African trade ties.

Another policy drafted by the Xi administration and suited to give win-win advantages and economic development to its participants is the 一带一路 *yīdài yīlù* 'Belt and Road Initiative'. Debuted in 2013, this ambitious project "not only promises a mega geoeconomic agenda to deepen regional economic cooperation along the Silk Road, but also sets up a great power strategy to advance China's geopolitical and geostrategic interests in Eurasia and beyond" (Zhou, Esteban 2018: 488). In other words, it strives for a close-knit regional multilateralism aimed at deeply benefiting all countries taking part in it and it advocates for China's validity of its soft power in the foreign community as well. The BRI comprises more than 100 countries with its land routes that stretch through Central and West Asia as well as most parts of Europe, reminiscing of the ancient Silk Road, and with the maritime routes that sail through the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean (Belt and Road 2023). The two authors explain the project develops in a variety of ways, through the promotion of new commercial ties and the construction of

infrastructures, like the already-mentioned African railways, natural materials pipelines, roads and new ports to station its military presence.

However, it must be noted that China has also complex relationships with the outside world, receiving plenty of critics. For instance, many researchers like Su (2017) believe that China's "sense of justice and compassion" in Africa isn't as benevolent and transparent as his leader affirms, because by giving out loans, which are going to deepen the difficult-to-repay sovereign debt, Beijing will inevitably have huge political bargaining influence over these African countries and will create political ties. Su thus talks about a new form of colonialism because these plans share similarities with the colonizers' procedures from the past: their economic leverages in the short term will provide financial gains such as money, but more importantly in the future they will provide strategical diplomatic advantages over the colonized.

Sometimes, the PRC is considered as a military threat by other countries because, as said in the inaugural address, it doesn't allow any territorial separation or occupation. An escalation concerning this matter happened with the China–India border standoff that occurred little less than a year before the NPC session, in the summer 2017. The conflict took place in disputed areas between the PRC and Bhutan, near the trijunction with India. On the 16th of June 2017, China sent building teams in the territory to extend a pre-existing road but met local rage since the land is claimed Bhutanese government (Safi 2017). Safi explains that the landlocked South Asian country requested aid from India, which dispatched troops near the construction site and was thus seen by Beijing as an occupation of its own territories, escalating the situation into intense rivalry.

Notwithstanding these hegemonic accusations, in his discourse Xi suggests that China is seen as a menace only by those who are used to threatening others. He might be referring to the US, because of the fact that it has a long history of meddling into other countries' internal disputes for dominance and surveillance purposes and a long history of involving itself into foreign government changes, from Latin American countries, the Philippines and Vietnam, to the more recent instances in the Honduran, Syrian and Ukrainian regimes (Tharoor 2016), implying that the States might actually be the real threat to society.

3.5.4 PHILOSOPHICAL VALUES

In regard to China's values, the speech is saturated with many philosophical elements, which are introduced in tandem with present concerns. Let's display them in order of appearance. First, as initially analysed in the discourse, Confucius' *junzi* had to be faithful to the morals of righteousness, wisdom, benevolence, integrity and rites. If he conformed to these, he was authorized to have control of the state because his pure intentions consisted in the construction of a harmonious society based on fairness and peace (Snell, Wu and Lei 2022: 184). Today, the President connects modern and ancient times by adopting traditional philosophical ethics as a modern ruler, who self-masters himself like a true *junzi* in order to contribute to the improvement of his country.

Second, due to the rising economic success and progressive modernization brought by Deng Xiaoping's opening to the outside world from in the 80ies, the Chinese society has increasingly become an individualistic community, although its Daoist and Confucian origins valued a person according to the relationships he had with others or overall, to his role in society (Matthyssen

2010). This means that features of collectivism supported by philosophical traditions have been progressively replaced by features of self-identity, driving individualism to fame. In response, it must be said that the involvement and unity shaped by Xi Jinping in the transition to argumentation section not only produce national strength and emotional grip, translating individual visions into social reality and collective actions, but paradoxically also trigger greater support for the leader's work, who will succeed in improving China simply by caring for the needs of individuals.

Moreover, the prevailing role of the family sphere in politics began to earn recognition with Confucius' 孝经 *Xiàojīng* 'Classic of Filial Piety'. In his treatise, the philosopher perfects the theory of filial piety, notion rooted in the moral values of submissiveness, sacrifice and hierarchy, and underlies the relationship between father and son. Children should be grateful for their parents' struggle to raise them and should thus commit themselves to serve them even after death (Teon 2016). This means that in order to completely devote to their parents, especially to the father, children have the absolute obligation to obey to them and take care of them, regardless of any situation, thus creating a pyramidal structure in the family. Link (2013: 200) thinks that since the Confucian's 五伦 *wūlún* 'five relations' include the father-son, husband-wife as well as the sovereign-subordinates' connections, political hierarchy will inevitably resemble a family ranking, placing the father, the husband and the ruler above their counterparts. The father is the authoritative figure of the family that must be honoured and revered by all means, but that simultaneously will take care of and provide for his relatives. Similarly, the monarch should provide better possibilities, defend his country and help achieve his citizens' aspirations, who in return will show loyalty and devotion and will be more likely to accept tighter control of their society.

Some considerations about the rule of law in China must be now presented, as this principle stems from philosophical concepts. The United Nations says the rule of law is "a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities [...] are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated", which means that no one, not even a country's government, stands above the law and thus everyone has accountability (United Nations official website). Clearly, it promotes equality and a liberal democracy. On the contrary, the rule *by* law promulgates that laws are instruments created and used by authorities in order to promote social order and mass people into groups at the expense of civil rights, therefore making those in charge not subjected to the law and not punishable (Law Society of British Columbia). Noticeably, this description fits China's legal system better than the former, since time and time again the leading cadres were given full responsibility and power, but nevertheless the first translation is usually chosen to try to communicate to foreign leaders an idea of fairness and freedom in China (Chin 2014).

The ambivalence of this notion in China traces its origins back to ancient times when both Confucianism and Legalism were providing their vision of justice. Confucian thinkers followed the ideal that the indoctrination of morality into the norms, which consisted of the popular concept of 礼 *lǐ*, was the necessary key to a positive government that granted social balance. On the other hand, the Legalist school thought that people only acted out of egoism and selfishness, damaging others. That is the reason why laws were promoted by the State as punitive means, for the ruler's

personal security and the general wellbeing of society (Orts 2001: 53). Orts then explains that the rule of law in the PRC gained popularity at the end of the seventies, after Mao's death, when a more efficient legal model was proved to result into a modernization of the Chinese market and economy, as well as into a comeback as one of the most economically modern nations in the global community. With the latest administration, judicial reforms still efficiently contained social tensions, by for example settling arguments faced by most common citizens, but they also professionalised the management of the nation and intensified the Party's power over the state (Rudolf 2021: 3-4). Paul Gewirtz (2014) clarifies that due to the significant capillary outreach of corruption in China, the leader opted for a law-based governance to restrain disobedient politicians and their authority. Furthermore, Xi is aware that compliance with some details of the international rule of law can strengthen the People's Republic of China's impact and benefits over the foreign governments of the world. Obviously, this adherence is purely instrumental, as it could give the Party more prominence in global judgement and law-making without agreeing with norms viewed as cumbersome, making it a mere cost-benefit scheme (Alcala, Gregory and Reeves 2018).

Finally, the notion of an environmental conservation has appeared in multiple instances in Chinese culture: its intrinsic principles were an important part of Daoism according to Schönfeld and Chen (2019: 5-9). They explain how ecological civilization in the eyes of Laozi meant harmony and symbiosis between the environment and humankind, unity which was reflected by the people's effort to both protect and respect nature but also transform it at the same time through a variety of actions, for example through the creation of better natural farming methods or ecological education and wilderness protection. Ecological progress was brought back in 2007 by the Hu Jintao administration and since then, a lot has been accomplished while still maintaining the nature-human alliance, like more in-depth and specific policies formulation and the rise of "demonstration construction", areas concerned with environmental issues that were chosen to show a remarkable implementation of the concept of ecological progress (Xue *et al.* 2023).

3.5.5 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUES

Xi Jinping also focuses much of his discourse on cultural and historical values, that can help to successfully shape the country and improve its economic status. Therefore, in spite of opposite times calling for a ruthless globalization and an apathetic modernization, it seems obvious that he desires to make traditional characteristics China's identity and cultural strong points. As pointed out in the qualitative analysis, to know and be constantly reminded about the past not only has the power to establish a better future, but it additionally fosters a feeling of community and patriotism. On the other hand, the communication of history can be also used as a means of propaganda, turning patriotism into nationalism in order to legitimize ongoing choices and causes. In this case, the constant recollection of glorious past actions is chosen to support and strengthen the power of political indoctrination (Reed, Dowling 2018: 90). Since Xi is not explicitly inciting his followers towards global hegemony, this dissertation gives the benefit of the doubt about his true intentions and supports the theory that the leader is simply showing appreciation to his country's heritage without any implied malice.

The first mention to China's millennial history can be found in the narrative section and is about its four main inventions, paper, gunpowder, printing and compass, that revolutionized the world's

trajectory. Moreover, Xi dwells on different eras of history when presenting Chinese works of art: the Book of Songs was written in X-VII century a.C. during the Zhou dynasty, the collection of songs of Chu Kingdom dates back to the Warring States period, and then the remaining imperial literature, from Han dynasty prose to novels from the last dynasty, the Qings, is introduced. Impressive architectural and engineering constructions, also creations of the Chinese spirit, are perfect examples of excellent expertise of the past, to the extent of being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Unesco 2023).

The general Secretary isn't merely addressing to the Han population when talking about epic characters, fundamental constituents of culture, but also to the minorities: to highlight the feeling of inclusion, he mentions the epic heroes Gesar, Manas and Jangar, who are famous among the Mongolians, the Tibetans, the Kyrgyz and the Xinjiang Mongols. Let's remember that China counts an ethnic minority population of almost 114 million individuals, one of the largest in the world, and is divided between 56 officially recognized ethnic groups, whose statuses are appointed at birth (Maurer-Fazio, Hasmath 2015: 1). 55 of these are considered minorities, which don't share the same experiences as the Han people, China's biggest ethnic group. It is important to give equal opportunities and rights to everybody and therefore Xi highlights his political inclusivity by suggesting that he is indeed talking to all ethnic groups, without making differences or exceptions.

The same happens when referencing folkloristic figures: they give a rich connotation of meaning and a touching artistic charm to the speech (Wang 2020: 79), they promote China's reputation by means of culture and mythology and give to Chinese people examples of heroic, strong and steadfast figures. These examples constitute the country's soft power which, as stated by the political scientist Joseph Nye, indicates the capacity to obtain desired results without the use of military, technological, political and/or economic force, but by opting for co-option and cultural allure (Lai 2012: 84). Lai explains that China has various resources to influence the Western world, like culture, art, philosophy, tourism, media, cuisine and, like in these cases, literature and history.

The narrative unit displays yet another historical example: the Century of Humiliation. It amounts to 110 years of Western and Japanese invasion and domestic corruption, starting from 1839 with the beginning of the First Opium War (1839-1842) and ending with the establishment in 1949 of what is known today as the People's Republic of China. Throughout both Opium Wars, the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the Eight-Nation Alliance during the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) and the Nanjing Massacre in 1937 at the hands of the Japanese Army, China endured territorial and military subjugations, unfair treaties and civil instability, which all sparked anger, humiliation, shame and revenge (Callahan 2004: 204-206). Those multiple defeats lead the country to 丢面子 *diū miànzi* 'lose-face, lose reputation' with the outside world, which is an important concept deeply rooted in Chinese culture. It implies the loss of status, honour and reputation among peers, and therefore being disgraced in front of others (Keevak 2022). Although painful, remembering that timeframe is essential for the legitimization of the CPP, who reunited the country by winning the Chinese civil war in 1949.

The Long March is another perfect example of historical moment that still moulds the country to the present day. It was sparked by the constant harassments of the Nationalists and resulted in the

perilous and strenuous escape of the Red Army from the remote Jiangxi province, the place they occupied for more than three years (Lau 2016). Today, it still stands as one of the pillars of the CCP, both historically and culturally speaking. It brings back to memory the great struggles endured by the participants and the sharp strategies carried out by Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai 周恩来 (1989-1976) and other leaders to win over the Kuomintang. At the same time, the Long March is the clear-cut manifestation of Chinese people's sacrifices, heroism, determination and persistence against all odds. Since the objectives for this political term are associated with it, Xi is thus creating a connection with the values the citizens should follow in order to succeed as 80 years before: by always leading the way with an indomitable spirit and united under the common socialist view to face all challenges (Dan 2016).

Historical unity, as observed in the qualitative analysis, also derives from the First United Front, an alliance between the CCP and the Kuomintang. It desired to make China a great central power again, meaning that both Western authorities, oppressors since the Opium Wars, and the northern military cliques, which gained momentum after Yuan Shikai's 袁世凯 (1859-1916) death, had to be overthrown (Fillingham 2019). The author also reveals the existence of the Second United Front, that counted again both parties in order to resist to the Japanese invasion during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). However, the united front present in the discourse dates back to the aftermath of WWII, when civil war (1946-1949) in China broke out. Led by Mao Zedong, it successfully isolated and later dethroned the Nationalist Party of China, marking the definitive success of the CCP and its socialist beliefs (Groot 2014). Today the united front is naturally still governed by the CCP and represents a variety of political bodies, institutions and public figures from the Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, which must be aligned to Party's views and will therefore promote intra bureaucratic discussions and partnership (China.org).

It must be noted that the Chairman also says that "Chinese people have been discarding the old and introducing the new". This concept, which in view of what has just been said seems inconsistent, is not new to Chinese culture and politics, because it gained fame during the Maoist era, more precisely during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Student-led Red Guards had to suppress the "Four Olds", namely the Old Culture, Old Habits, Old Ideas and Old Customs, pre-communist and anti-proletarian elements which were "fostered by the exploiting classes, [and] have poisoned the minds of the people for thousands of years" (Li 1995: 427). It's clear that what remained of ancient superstitions, social customs, pieces of clothing, religious rituals and festivals was fiercely assaulted and destroyed during that tumultuous period (Durdin 1971). The same instance happened when Deng Xiaoping rose to power, because his new reforms favoured the Socialism with Chinese characteristics to the detriment of the old Maoist culture and policies (Braun 1994: 12-14). Obviously, today Xi does not use this association to promote a full rejection of the past, but utilizes all historical images above analysed with the aim to improve and innovate contemporary China through, again, the use of political regulations.

In conclusion, he asks the listeners to conform to new future developments of the PRC and main changes of the community, while at the same time keeping in mind the values of the Socialism with Chinese characteristics and the past decisions taken by the government in different occasions.

The latter obviously include the foundations of the CCP's ideology, such as 马克思列宁主义 *Mǎkèsī Lièníng zhǔyì* 'Marxism-Leninism', Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory, as well as the Theory of Three Represents, elaborated by Jiang Zemin, and the Scientific Outlook on Development, displayed by Hu Jintao, that have also shaped the China the world knows today. All these past decisions and political actions presented in this chapter, even when they vary in technicalities, are all united by the same goal or future state of affairs of maintaining the succession of power and the validity of the Communist Party, while at the same time conforming to the fundamental cultural values and the country's circumstances above stated.

Chapter 4: Xi Jinping's third inaugural speech at the first session of the 14th National People's Congress

4.1 SYNOPSIS

The Secretary's speech at the 14th NPC summarizes the general political guidelines that must be followed for the next five years. Before introducing the crucial points to comply with and China's future goals for this mandate, Xi takes a moment to show appreciation to and thank all political members and Chinese people for continuing to trust his vision. He promises once again to faithfully execute his duties to provide improvements to the nation. He briefly mentions the country's turbulent past, marked by multiple adversities, to then move on to the Chinese future, achievable by means of the CCP's strategic plans. Subsequently, he explains that the required developments must comprehend the technological, educational, scientific and economic fields, but must also remain committed to making people and their needs a primary concern. In order to do so, China must find ways to proficiently coordinate development and security, which Xi says, also deals with Hong Kong and Macau's governance, as well as the Taiwan question. Moreover, the President declares that China should not only strive for national improvements, but should also promote global progress: these goals can be fulfilled only if the leadership of the Party is held high. The discourse ends with promising growth forecasts and motivational words to achieve national rejuvenation. that should permeate both fellow deputies and the general population.

4.2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.2.1 MODAL VERBS

Modal verbs are also extensively used in the third inaugural address, but 2 main differences are noticeable: first, due to the length difference between the two speeches, the one in question here only counts 22 total occurrences of modal verbs, against the 58 of the second inaugural address. Moreover, the former only employs 5 types of modal verbs and no negations, whereas, as previously analysed, the latter is much richer in variety. The similarity between them is the high repetition of the modal 要 *yào* 'should, must': in this discourse as well it appears frequently, 18 times to be exact. Another similarity consists in the total dominance of participant-external modal: among them the majority signals anankastic necessity (59,1%) over deontic necessity (36,4%).

TABLE 12: MODAL DISTRIBUTION BY MODAL CATEGORIES.

Modality	No.	%	Chinese	Modal Meaning	No.
PARTICIPANT-EXTERNAL DEONTIC NECESSITY	8	36,4%	yào 要 should	Moral duty	8
PARTICIPANT-EXTERNAL ANANKASTIC NECESSITY	13	59,1%	zhǐyǒu ...cái néng 只有...才能 only if A then B	Only possibility	1
			bìxū 必须 must, have to	Practical necessity	2
			yào 要 must	Necessity	10
FUTURITY (POST MODAL USAGE)	1	4,5	jiāng 将 will, be going to	Futurity	1
Total	22	100%			22

4.2.2 VERBS

Concerning the verbs, this speech is composed of 139 of them with a total occurrence of 250 components. These results were acquired thanks to the use of Sketch Engine's wordlist tool and also comprise the presence of modal.

TABLE 13: FIRST 50 VERBS PER PREVALENCE.

Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency	Verb	Frequency
1 要	18	14 为	3	27 团结	2	40 强	2
2 推进	12	15 创新	3	28 扎实	2	41 当家	2
3 发展	10	16 解决	3	29 增强	2	42 开	2
4 推动	9	17 实现	3	30 有	2	43 开拓	1
5 是	9	18 无	2	31 构建	2	44 变味	1
6 坚持	7	19 完善	2	32 离	2	45 取得	1
7 治	5	20 保障	2	33 站	2	46 变色	1
8 贯彻	5	21 健全	2	34 加快	2	47 变质	1
9 坚定不移	4	22 担任	2	35 勇于	2	48 具有	1
10 保持	3	23 作出	2	36 作主	2	49 兴	1
11 起来	3	24 践行	2	37 维护	2	50 感谢	1
12 代表	3	25 惠及	2	38 反对	2		
13 成为	3	26 准确	2	39 建成	2		

4.2.3 ADVERBS

The third inaugural address is composed of 43 adverbs with a total occurrence of 74 items. These results were also acquired thanks to the use of Sketch Engine's wordlist tool.

TABLE 14: FIRST 20 ADVERBS PER PREVALENCE.

Adverb Frequency		Adverb Frequency	
1 全面	8	11 依法	2
2 不	7	12 正	2
3 更	5	13 永远	1
4 不断	4	14 和平	1
5 共同	3	15 只	1
6 始终	3	16 稳定	1
7 积极	3	17 好	1
8 也	2	18 坚决	1
9 协调	2	19 先	1
10 充分	2	20 衷心	1

4.2.4 SKETCH ENGINE'S N-GRAMS

As said before, Sketch Engine's function N-grams helps make frequency lists of sequences of tokens, that are the smallest unit that a corpus consists of: for the 3rd inaugural speech lists of 2, 3 and 4 items frequently found in tandem were organized.

TABLE 15: 2 ITEMS N-GRAMS.

N-gram	Frequency
1 强国 建设	9
2 我们 要	9
3 民族 复兴	8
4 人民 的	6
5 复兴 的	5

TABLE 16: 3 ITEMS N-GRAMS.

N-gram	Frequency
1 民族 复兴 的	5

TABLE 17: 4 ITEMS N-GRAMS.

N-gram	Frequency	N-gram	Frequency
1 全国 各族 人民	4	11 一 国 两 制	2
2 全 面 建 成 社 会 主 义 现 代 化	2		
3 建 成 社 会 主 义 现 代 化 强 国	2		
4 中 华 民 族 伟 大 复 兴	2		
5 各 族 人 民 的	2		
6 我 们 要 扎 实 推 进	2		
7 我 们 这 一 代	2		
8 这 一 代 人	2		
9 和 全 国 各 族	2		
10 代 表 和 全 国 各	2		

4.2.5 FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS

As already mentioned, they are idioms, phrases, fixed sequences, or more generally pre-constructed units, that originate from memory, in this instance, from Chinese history, literature, philosophy or culture. The inaugural speech counts 11 total idioms, or *chengyu*, ranging from a variety of spheres. One in particular, 坚定不移 *jiān-dìng-bù-yí* ‘unswervingly’, occurs 4 times.

4.2.6 NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES REINFORCING METAPHORS AND POLITICAL CONCEPTS

Concerning the nouns and adjectives distribution, the third speech is composed of 204 nouns, with a total occurrence of 421 components, and 39 adjectives, occurring in total 61 times. These results as well were all retrieved by using Sketch Engine’s wordlist tool. Just like in the previous chapter, these elements will help understand Chinese political goals, actions and employed metaphors.

TABLE 18: FIRST 50 NOUNS PER PREVALENCE.

Noun	Frequency	Noun	Frequency	Noun	Frequency	Noun	Frequency
1 人民	23	14 战略	6	27 团结	3	40 军队	2
2 建设	15	15 体系	5	28 治理	3	41 时代	2
3 发展	14	16 现代化	5	29 人	3	42 力量	2
4 民族	13	17 经济	5	30 祖国	3	43 水平	2
5 强国	11	18 位	5	31 领导	3	44 民生	2
6 党	10	19 世界	5	32 倡议	2	45 命运	2
7 复兴	10	20 统一	4	33 社会主义	2	46 澳	2
8 中国	8	21 全国	4	34 信任	2	47 和平	2
9 安全	8	22 社会	4	35 港	2	48 澳门	2
10 国家	7	23 全球	4	36 统筹	2	49 香港	2
11 历史	7	24 代表	4	37 征程	2	50 个	2
12 国	7	25 族	4	38 实力	2		
13 中华	7	26 格局	3	39 次	2		

TABLE 19: FIRST 20 ADJECTIVES PER PREVALENCE.

Adjective	Frequency	Adjective	Frequency
1 新	7	11 共同	1
2 一	6	12 真正	1
3 大	5	13 统一	1
4 伟大	3	14 好	1
5 两	3	15 宏伟	1
6 总体	2	16 对外	1
7 公共	2	17 实质性	1
8 高	2	18 半封建	1
9 多	1	19 崇高	1
10 决定性	1	20 强	1

4.3 RHETORIC STRUCTURE

This speech consists of 1854 Chinese characters, equivalent to 1458 English words in the official translation. The division of Xi's 3rd inaugural address in the above-mentioned six parts, shown in table 20, will be critical to pinpoint where the lexical elements, presented above and later analysed, occur in the text.

TABLE 20: SEQUENCE AND LENGTH OF THE RHETORIC UNITS IN THE SPEECH.

Rhetoric unit		Characters number	%
1. Introduction		158	8,6%
2. Narrative		183	9,8%
3. Transition		201	10,8%
Argumentation	4. Procedural	1055	56,9%
	5. Hortatory	149	8%
6. Conclusion		108	5,9%
Total		1854	100%

4.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The official Chinese text of the speech and its official English translation are taken from the China Daily website (Xi Jinping 2023) and the Xinhua News website (Xi Jinping 2023b), referred to in the Primary sources section of the Bibliography.

4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

After a second term in which foreign initiatives, environmental policies, public wellbeing and the reaffirmation of state dominance and influence over state-owned enterprises (SOE), non-governmental organizations (NGO) and different economic sectors (Scobell 2022) were all achieved, Xi Jinping begins the speech by thanking two fundamental categories that trusted him and supported his political re-election: all fellow deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

«各位代表:

这次大会选举我继续担任中华人民共和国主席, 我对各位代表和全国各族人民的信任, 表示衷心感谢!

这是我第三次担任国家主席这一崇高职务。人民的信任, 是我前进的最大动力, 也是我肩上沉甸甸的责任。我将忠实履行宪法赋予的职责, 以国家需要为使命, 以人民利益为准绳, 恪尽职守, 竭诚奉献, 绝不辜负各位代表和全国各族人民的重托! »

«Fellow deputies,

I was elected at this session to continue to serve as the president of the People's Republic of China (PRC). I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the trust placed in me by all the deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

It is my third time to take on this noble position of the president of the PRC. The people's trust has been my greatest source of strength to go forward and also the greatest responsibility on my shoulders. I will faithfully fulfill the duties prescribed in the Constitution, take the needs of the country as my mission and the people's interests as the yardstick to

follow, be committed and honest in my duties, devote myself to my work without reserve, and never fail to live up to the great trust of the deputies and the people. »⁴

As already mentioned in the second inaugural speech and as we are going to see throughout this discourse as well, both groups will be acknowledged respectively 7 and 4 times and will be the centre of attention not only for the President's gratitude but as well as for the establishment of new implementations. Xi Jinping clarifies from the very beginning the importance of this inaugural speech (44):

(44) 这是我第三次担任国家主席这一崇高职务

zhè shì wǒ dì sān cì dānrèn guójiā zhǔxí zhè yī chónggāo zhíwù
this be I AFFIX three time serve as country president this one high duty
'It is my third time to take on this noble position of the president of the PRC'

As already anticipated in the first chapter, this session of the 14th National People's Congress will forever be remembered as a turning event in Chinese politics due to the unprecedented third election of Xi, as he states with the token 三次担任国家主席 *dì sān cì dānrèn guójiā zhǔxí* 'third time as the president of the country'. The decision, heavily criticized by the West, comes after 40 years dictated by the two-mandates policy stipulated by Deng Xiaoping in order to avoid the *one-man rule* and cult of personality that rose to fame during the Maoist decades (Mackey Frayer 2018).

The other focus of the introduction section is clearly the trust of his colleagues and of his citizens: in fact, the President decides to repeat it three time, twice with the noun 信任 *xìnrèn* 'trust' and once with the noun 重托 *zhòngtuō* 'great trust'. He highlights its importance by saying that it helps and motives him to do better, as it is considered his 最大动力 *zuìdà dònglì* 'greatest source of strength' to progress as well as his 肩上沉甸甸的责任 *jiān shàng chén diàn diàn de zérèn* 'heaviest responsibility on his shoulders'. In order to maintain the trust placed in him high, he promises to place his duties, the people's needs and interests in first place and view them as his most critical missions. The adjectives, idioms and verbs used to describe his political execution are 忠实 *zhōngshí* 'faithfully', 恪尽职守 *kèjìn-zhíshǒu* 'scrupulously and with all honesty', 竭诚 *jiéchéng* 'wholeheartedly' and 奉献 *fèngxiàn* 'devote, with dedication'. Once again, all of these words recall the figure of the Confucian *junzi* presented in chapter 3 and draw an implicit association between him and Xi Jinping.

⁴ For all quotations and examples in this Chapter, Official English translation from Xi Jinping (2023b).

4.4.2 NARRATIVE

The narrative section in the third inaugural address is a lot shorter than the second inaugural address because it does not present all the descriptions of the Chinese people's spirit, but only rapidly highlights key historical events that shaped the country that is known today.

«各位代表!

«具有五千多年文明史的中华民族，在历史上创造了无数辉煌，也经历过许多磨难。近代以后，中国逐步成为半殖民地半封建社会，饱受列强欺凌、四分五裂、战乱频繁、生灵涂炭之苦。中国共产党成立之后，紧紧团结带领全国各族人民，经过百年奋斗，洗雪民族耻辱，中国人民成为自己命运的主人，中华民族迎来了从站起来、富起来到强起来的伟大飞跃，中华民族伟大复兴进入了不可逆转的历史进程。»

«Fellow deputies,

The Chinese nation, with a civilization spanning over 5,000 years, has created a myriad of glories and also been through a lot of hardships and adversity. With the advent of modern times, **China was reduced to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, when bullying by foreign powers and frequent wars tore the country apart and plunged the Chinese people into an abyss of great suffering.** Since its founding, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has closely united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in working hard for a century to put an end to China's national humiliation. **The Chinese people have become the masters of their future, the Chinese nation has achieved the great transformation from standing up and growing prosperous to becoming strong,** and China's national rejuvenation has become a historical inevitability. »

The Chinese leader once again tries to rally together people's heart and feelings by reminiscing their long history and thus where they come from. He talks about both 辉煌 *huīhuáng* 'glories' and 磨难 *mónàn* 'adversities', and what is relevant about both is the choice of their adjectival determinant: China has experienced 无数 *wúshù* 'countless' of positive things and events, as well as 许多 *xǔduō* 'a lot of' hardships. What is also interesting to notice is that the word 辉煌 *huīhuáng* is actually meant to be used as an adjective, but in this paragraph serves its purposes as a noun.

In the narrative unit Xi also focuses his rhetoric on two types of transformation, which are both signalled by the employment of the verb 成为 *chéngwéi* 'turn into, become' twice (out of the three total occurrences of the speech), which in fact opens the way for two very different descriptions of his country. First, China was subjugated by European nations and deprived of its rights and powers, resulting in considerable difficulties for both the political sphere and the population (45).

(45) 中国逐步成为半殖民地半封建社会，饱受列强欺凌、四分五裂、战乱频繁、生灵涂炭之苦。

Zhōngguó zhúbù chéngwéi bàn zhīmíndì bànfēngjiàn shèhuì, bǎoshòu

China progressively become half colony semi-feudal society, suffer from

lièqiáng qīlǐng, sìfēnwūliè, zhànluàn pínfán, shēnglíngtùtàn zhī kǔ

big.powers bully, disintegrate, chaos.of.war frequent, people.in.terrible.situation ZHI suffering.

'China was reduced to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, when bullying by foreign powers and frequent wars tore the country apart and plunged the Chinese people into an abyss of great suffering.'

First of all, it's understandable from the adverb 逐步 *zhúbù* 'gradually, progressively' how this process slowly grew stronger year after year, making that period of time energy-draining and overall more and more exhausting. Moreover, verbs and nouns with negative meanings are chosen

to perfectly describe the frustration and subjugation of the past: the population suffered from (饱受 *bǎoshòu* ‘suffer from’) bullying and humiliation, which were perpetuated by the noun 欺凌 *lièqíáng* ‘big powers’, and from the 战乱 *zhànluàn* ‘chaos of war’. Not only the noun 苦 *kǔ* ‘pain, suffering’ reiterates this concept, but also the chengyu 四分五裂 *sì-fēn-wǔ-liè* ‘to be all split up and in pieces’ and 生灵涂炭 *sheng-líng-tú-tàn* ‘to plunge the people into misery and suffering’ help really accentuate the negativity and darkness the Chinese people went through during those dark times.

After the foundation of the CCP, thanks to the hard work of the people, another transformation occurred, and this time for the better (46):

(46) 中国人民成为自己命运的主人，中华民族迎来了从站起来、富起来到强起来的伟大飞跃

Zhōngguó rénmin chéngwéi zìjǐ mìngyùn de zhǔrén, zhōnghuá mínzú yínglái le
China people become oneself destiny DE director, China nation welcome LE
cóng zhàn qǐlái, fù qǐlái dào qiáng qǐlái de wěidà fēiyuè
from stand QILAI, wealthy QILAI to strong QILAI DE great leap
‘the Chinese people have become the masters of their future, the Chinese nation has achieved the
great transformation from standing up and growing prosperous to becoming strong’

The transformation can be detected by, as previously analysed, the verb 成为 *chéngwéi* ‘turn into’ and also by the choice of the noun 飞跃 *fēiyuè* ‘leap’, which gives the reader the sensation of a fast and abrupt change towards the complete eradication of national shame. Moreover, the metamorphosis of the Chinese nation is also evoked by the vocabulary change, which now is more positive and future oriented. In fact, Xi Jinping uses the noun 命运 *mìngyùn* ‘future, destiny’ and the adjectival verbs 富(起来)强(起来) *fù (qǐlái) qiáng (qǐlái)* ‘(to grow) wealthy and strong’, which all imply inevitable growth, positivity, hope and improvement.

4.4.3 TRANSITION TO ARGUMENTATION

Turning now to the transition to argumentation section, the Chairman examines even more in depth the future goals and responsibilities of the Communist Party of China and of the Chinese people that have to be followed until 2049, year that will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China.

«从现在起到本世纪中叶，全面建成社会主义现代化强国、全面推进中华民族伟大复兴，是全党全国人民的中心任务。强国建设、民族复兴的接力棒，历史地落在我们这一代人身上。我们要按照党的二十大的战略部署，坚持统筹推进“五位一体”总体布局、协调推进“四个全面”战略布局，加快推进中国式现代化建设，团结奋斗，开拓创新，在新征程上作出无负时代、无负历史、无负人民的业绩，为推进强国建设、民族复兴作出我们这一代人的应有贡献! »

«From now until the middle of the century, the central task of the Party and all Chinese people is to complete building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advance national rejuvenation on all fronts. And the baton of this central task has now been historically passed on to our generation. In accordance with the strategic plans made at

the 20th CPC National Congress, we must implement the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan and the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy, speed up Chinese modernization, strive in unity, and continue to break new ground, so as to make achievements on the new journey that answer the call of our times and history and meet the expectations of our people, and make due contributions of our generation to building a great country and achieving national rejuvenation. »

The paragraph describes a critical task: completing China's transformation into a comprehensive, modern socialist country by the middle of the twenty-first century and revitalising the nation in diverse ways. Xi pays great attention in the definition of these actions, choosing to describe them through the adverb 全面 *quánmiàn* 'comprehensive', present here twice out of the total 8 occurrences of the speech. He thus means that to achieve China's development and great rejuvenation, every inadequate aspect, no matter its sphere of scope, must be resolved and therefore improved. Improvements have to be implemented in every national field, from politics, to economy to society; nothing can be left behind. He then makes use of a new and interesting image, which was not present in the second inaugural speech (47):

(47) 强国建设、民族复兴的接力棒，历史地落在我们这一代人身上。

qiángguó jiànshè, mínzú fùxīng de jiēlibàng, lìshǐ de luò zài wǒmen zhè yīdài rén shēnshang.
strong country build, nation rejuvenation DE baton, history DE fall in 1PL this era people body.on

'the baton of this central task has now been historically passed on to our generation.'

The crucial tasks of building a strong country and pushing forward the national rejuvenation are seen as a 接力棒 *jiēlibàng* 'baton', which is symbolically transmitted from the past to the present generation. The metaphor that is formed suggests that these goals are in a race to be achieved before the middle of the century and that this long race started in the past. To highlight the idea of a long journey and therefore convey emotional shared experience, the President uses 7 words that Magagnin (2016) associates with the conceptual domain of journey, navigation and progress: the verb 推进 *tuījìn* 'carry forward' occurs 5 times out of the total 12 occurrences, as attested by Table 12, the verb 加快 *jiākuài* 'accelerate' and the noun 征程 *zhēngchéng* 'expedition' both strengthen the same image of speed, journey and progress. Liu and Tan (2021: 96-100) state that General Secretary Xi Jinping always uses humorous and wise images like the one in question to win the recognition, acceptance and love of his audience, giving people a sense of ease and pleasure. The authors believe that such vividness and humour are one of his major linguistic features: he is said to be good at using the rhetorical technique of the metaphor, making his language art humorous, vivid and relevant.

It's currently unclear if the beginning coincides with the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 or with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, but it's evident that regardless the start of this long journey, the participants, generation after generation, have been united by the same ambitions and only by working together one after another and overcoming together the same hardships will the nation realise its biggest dreams. Today, the actions that must

be implemented can be found in the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party report. These are introduced by the modal verb of the anankastic field 要 yào ‘must’, that signals the expression of practical necessities and inevitable actions. Even if it’s the only modal verb found in this rhetoric unit, it opens the way for the other modalities located in the next sections, namely the procedural and hortatory argumentations. The report emphasises strategic plan implementation, such as the 五位一体总体布局 wǔ wèi yītǐ zǒngtǐ bùjú ‘Five-Sphere Integrated Plan’ and the 四个全面战略布局 sì gè quánmiàn zhànliè bùjú ‘Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy’, the acceleration of China’s modernization, the promotion of the people’s unification and substantial breakthroughs that are in line with present era demands and expectations of the population. Once again, Xi stresses the importance of comprehensive and total implementation on all fronts with the choice of the verb 统筹 tǒngchóu ‘plan an entire project as a whole’ and the adjective 总体 zǒngtǐ ‘totally, entire, overall’.

4.4.4 PROCEDURAL ARGUMENTATION

As we are about to analyse, this first passage of the procedural argumentation emphasizes several key points regarding China's development strategy and priorities: the importance of balanced and sustainable economic development, the priority of the social well-being and participation, and the unity necessary for achieving the shared goals of national development and rejuvenation.

«各位代表!

在强国建设、民族复兴的新征程，我们要坚定不移推动高质量发展。要完整、准确、全面贯彻新发展理念，加快构建新发展格局，深入实施科教兴国战略、人才强国战略、创新驱动发展战略，着力提升科技自立自强能力，推动产业转型升级，推动城乡区域协调发展，推动经济社会发展绿色化、低碳化，推动经济实现质的有效提升和量的合理增长，不断壮大我国经济实力、科技实力、综合国力。

我们要始终坚持人民至上。全面建成社会主义现代化强国，人民是决定性力量。要积极发展全过程人民民主，坚持党的领导、人民当家作主、依法治国有统一，健全人民当家作主制度体系，实现人民意志，保障人民权益，充分激发全体人民的积极性主动性创造性。要贯彻以人民为中心的发展思想，完善分配制度，健全社会保障体系，强化基本公共服务，兜牢民生底线，解决好人民群众急难愁盼问题，让现代化建设成果更多更公平惠及全体人民，在推进全体人民共同富裕上不断取得更为明显的实质性进展。要不断巩固发展全国各族人民大团结、海内外中华儿女大团结，充分调动一切积极因素，凝聚起强国建设、民族复兴的磅礴力量。»

«Fellow deputies,

On the new journey to build China into a great country and to achieve national rejuvenation, **we must unwaveringly promote high-quality development. We must fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts** and accelerate the efforts to foster a new development pattern. We must fully implement the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy and the innovation-driven development strategy, and **focus on achieving greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology.** We must also promote transformation and upgrading of industries, **promote coordinated urban-rural and regional development, make further efforts to build a green and low-carbon economy and society,** and effectively upgrade the quality and appropriately expand the output of our economy, so as to constantly increase our economic strength, scientific and technological capabilities and composite national strength.

We must remain committed to putting the people first. The people are the decisive force for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. **We must proactively develop whole-process people's democracy,** uphold the unity between the Party leadership, the running of the country by the people and law-based governance, improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country, fulfill the people's will, protect their rights and interests and fully inspire their enthusiasm, initiative and creativity. We need to implement a people-centered philosophy of development, improve the system of income distribution, perfect the social security system, and enhance basic public services. We must ensure that the basic living needs of all our people are met, and work hard to resolve the pressing difficulties and problems that concern them most. We must do a better job of seeing to it that the gains of modernization

benefit all our people fairly, and make more notable and substantive progress in promoting common prosperity for all. We must strengthen the great unity of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and the great unity of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and abroad, thus mobilizing all positive factors to give shape to a mighty joint force for building a great country and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. »

The fundamental concept of this initial part of the procedural argumentation is the Chinese development strategy in several fields: the focus is detectable in the abundance of the word 发展 *fāzhǎn* ‘develop, development’, which is used 9 times as both a name and a verb, like it is attested in examples (48) and (49). When 发展 *fāzhǎn* ‘develop, development’ is used as a name, it is frequently disclosed by the verb 推动 *tuīdòng* ‘promote’, which is here used 5 times and highlights the promotion of such development, like in sentences (49) and (50). Moreover, almost all of these requests contain the modal anankastic verb 要 *yào* ‘must’, that conveys the practical necessity which is situation-oriented. As we can see in (50), sometimes the pronoun and the modal verb are omitted in the Chinese version of the text, but still appear in its English counterpart, so even if the passages currently counts 6 occurrences, one should keep in mind that the Chinese speaker knows that all of the actions presented by Xi Jinping are to be taken as necessary to implement the Chinese development strategy. In fact, Po-Ching and Rimmington (2004: 373-378) confirm that the avoidance of repetition wherever possible, such as in longer sentences and where context makes the meaning clear, and therefore omissions are important elements of the Chinese discourse structure.

(48) 我们要坚定不移推动高质量发展。

wǒmen yào jiān-dìng-bù-yí tuīdòng gāo zhìliàng fāzhǎn.

1PL must unswerving promote high quality development.

‘we must unswervingly promote high-quality development.’

(49) [我们]要积极发展全过程人民民主

[wǒmen] yào jījí fāzhǎn quán guòchéng rénmin mínzhǔ

[1PL] must active develop complete process people democracy

‘we must proactively develop whole-process people's democracy’

(50) [我们要]推动城乡区域协调发展，推动经济社会发展绿色化

[Wǒmen yào] tuīdòng chéngxiāng qūyù xiétiáo fāzhǎn, tuīdòng jīngjì

[1PL] must promote urban.rural region coordinate development, promote economy

shèhuì fāzhǎn lǜsèhuà

society development greenization

‘we must promote coordinated urban-rural and regional development, make further efforts to build a green and low-carbon economy and society’

This extract deals about five main Chinese priorities, namely the PRC’s high-quality development, its economic and social improvement, its people-centred approach, its common prosperity and social welfare and lastly the country’s unity and social collaboration. The General Secretary says

that China is fully dedicated to reaching high-quality development through the implementation of a new comprehensive development philosophy and the promotion of new growth structures. This involves spending energy and heavy emphasis on research, education, innovation, and technology, with the goal of increasing self-sufficiency and progress in these areas. The choice of repeating the noun 战略 *zhànliè* ‘strategy’ three times in a single sentence is interesting because, as explained in Magagnin’s (2016) research, this particular word can be associated with a domain based on war and battles and might refer to the fact that Chinese people should be ready to fight for the ultimate goal of developing their own country under every field. Moreover, in (51) it must be noted the focus on the self with the two occurrences of the pronoun 自 *zì* ‘oneself’ that really accentuates the need to do these actions for the country’s own personal benefit.

(51) 着力提升科技自立自强能力

zhuólì *tíshēng* *kējì* *zìlì* *zìqiáng* *nénglì*
 put.effort.in elevate science and technology self-reliant self-strength capacity
 ‘to focus on achieving greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology’

The plan also includes an economic and social upgrading, which entails industrial transformation and improvement, the encouragement of a balanced urban-rural and regional growth, and the transition to a green and sustainable economy. The objective is to upgrade the economy's quality and production while expanding 经济实力、科技实力、综合国力 *jīngjì shíli, kējì shíli, zònghé guóli* ‘scientific, technical, and national capabilities’. Furthermore, Xi stresses the importance of putting people first through his and his fellow deputies leadership. It means involving the establishment of a complete people's democracy, as well as the maintenance of unity among Party leadership, public governance, and the rule of law. It also includes the enhancement of people's rights, meeting their desires, and fostering 3 critical elements, namely their 积极性 *jījìxìng* ‘active enthusiasm’, 创造性 *chuàngzàoxìng* ‘creativity’, and 主动性 *zhǔdòngxìng* ‘initiative’.

Regarding shared wealth and social wellbeing, the President and the government commit to improve the share and distribution of income, to boost the social security structure, and enhance fundamental public services, that could be for example public transports in all the nation, public healthcare and education. Key components also include ensuring basic living requirements are met, resolving serious societal concerns, and fostering equitable sharing of benefits from modernization. Finally, the need for national unity and collaboration is presented. The members of the CCP must put great effort in strengthening the unity of all ethnic groups inside China and creating unity among the Chinese people both inland and abroad. The ultimate aim is to gather together positive energies in order to achieve national growth and the rejuvenation of China. The method to convey more solidarity and social collaboration once again is to describe the population like it was united in one single big family. As already analysed in the second inaugural address, the *chengyu* 当家作主 *dāngjiā zuò zhǔ* ‘to be in charge in one’s own house’, here used twice in the same sentence, clarifies the power citizens hold in the State and creates the conceptual domain of a close-knit

community between the two, favouring the idea that “the Chinese nation is a house and a family” (Magagnin 2016: 360). Moreover, the same concept is presented when people inland and abroad are all referred to as 中华儿女 *zhōnghuá érǚ* ‘sons and daughters of China’.

To finish off the qualitative analysis of this initial passage of the procedural argumentation, it must be noted the great frequency of verbal determinants and adverbs. Two are clearly detectable in example (48), where the idiom 坚定不移 *jiān-dìng-bù-yí* ‘unswervingly’ is presented before its verb 推动 *tuīdòng* ‘promote’, and in example (49) with 积极 *jījī* ‘actively’. Other adverbs are 全面 *quánmiàn* ‘comprehensively’, which reoccurs other two times, 完整 *wánzhěng* ‘fully’ and 准确 *zhǔnquè* ‘accurately’ in (52), 不断 *bùduàn* ‘continuously’, which appears three times out of the total four of the speech and 充分 *chōngfèn* ‘as fully as possible’ with its two occurrences.

(52) 要完整、准确、全面贯彻新发展理念

yào wánzhěng, zhǔnquè, quánmiàn guànchè xīn fāzhǎn lǐniàn
must fully, accurately, comprehensively implement new develop philosophy
‘we must fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts’

The next paragraphs of the procedural argumentation outline several key aspects of China's policy approach, namely its national security, the governance of the special administrative regions (SARs) Hong Kong and Macao, and the issue of Taiwan's reunification.

«我们要更好统筹发展和安全。安全是发展的基础，稳定是强盛的前提。要贯彻总体国家安全观，健全国家安全体系，增强维护国家安全能力，提高公共安全治理水平，完善社会治理体系，以新安全格局保障新发展格局。要全面推进国防和军队现代化建设，把人民军队建设成为有效维护国家主权、安全、发展利益的钢铁长城。

我们要扎实推进“一国两制”实践和祖国统一大业。推进强国建设，离不开香港、澳门长期繁荣稳定。要全面准确、坚定不移贯彻“一国两制”、“港人治港”、“澳人治澳”、高度自治的方针，坚持依法治港治澳，支持香港、澳门特别行政区发展经济、改善民生，更好融入国家发展大局。实现祖国完全统一是全体中华儿女的共同愿望，是民族复兴的题中之义。要贯彻新时代党解决台湾问题的总体方略，坚持一个中国原则和“九二共识”，积极促进两岸关系和平发展，坚决反对外部势力干涉和“台独”分裂活动，坚定不移推进祖国统一进程。»

«We need to better coordinate development and security. **Security is the foundation of development and stability is the prerequisite for prosperity.** We must resolutely pursue a holistic approach to national security, **improve the national security system, strengthen our capacity for safeguarding national security, enhance public security governance, and improve the social governance system.** With this new security architecture, we will be able to better safeguard China's new pattern of development. We should comprehensively promote the modernization of our national defense and our armed forces, and build the people's military into a great wall of steel that can effectively safeguard our nation's sovereignty, security and the interests of our development.

We should solidly promote the practice of "one country, two systems" and the great cause of national reunification. The long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions is indispensable to the building of a great China. We should fully, faithfully, and resolutely implement the policy of "one country, two systems," under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong and the people of Macao administer Macao, both with a high degree of autonomy. We will remain committed to law-based governance in Hong Kong and Macao and will support Hong Kong and Macao in developing their economies and improving people's livelihood, so that they can better integrate themselves into the overall development of the country. Realizing China's complete reunification is a shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation as well as the essence of national rejuvenation. We should implement the Party's overall policy for resolving the Taiwan question in the new era, uphold the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, actively promote the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, resolutely oppose foreign interference and separatist activities aimed at "Taiwan independence," and unswervingly promote progress towards national reunification.»

As understandable from the very first sentences of this part, Xi Jinping's crucial objective doesn't merely revolve around the improvement of the country, but it first envisions the building of a greater safe structure in which the aforementioned development can truly prosper (53).

(53) 安全是发展的基础，稳定是强盛的前提。

ānquán shì fāzhǎn de jīchǔ, wěndìng shì qiángshèng de qiántí.
security be develop DE basis, stability be rich and powerful DE premise
'security is the foundation of development and stability is the prerequisite for prosperity.'

The statement underscores the link of national security and development, because the second relies and is based on (基础 *jīchǔ* 'basis, foundation') the former and at the same time the stability that originates from national security is going to be necessary and mandatory (前提 *qiántí* 'prerequisite') before the country's wealth can be fully accomplished. It's interesting to note that the prosperity the Chairman is talking about in the English counterpart is given by a noun, 'prosperity', whereas for the Chinese speech prefers the combination of two adjectives. If one was to better analyse them, he would discover that Xi isn't only talking about wealth, 盛 *shèng* 'flourishing', but also about strength, which is given by the adjective 强 *qiáng* 'strong'. It can be discerned that in his eyes, prosperity isn't merely a matter of fortune and well-being, but also a matter of power and thus, stability is required for both national wealth and strength.

China intends to strengthen its national security system, improve public security governance, and build a comprehensive security architecture to defend its developing growth pattern. Moreover, the importance of enhancing national defence and military modernization to safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and developmental interests is also strongly emphasised. One particularity that must be fully examined is the high frequency of the noun 安全 *ānquán* 'security', with which this inaugural address and more specifically this rhetoric section is bombarded. In just 4 simple and medium-length sentences, the word appears a total of 8 times against the single occurrence that was retraceable in the whole second inaugural speech: something during Xi Jinping's second mandate must have triggered him to put a deeper focus on the security of the PRC. What could have created this impelling necessity will be better discussed in the next section of this chapter, the intermediate conclusions. Regardless of the context, it's clear that if the attention of the procedural argumentation was initially put on China's development (as already cited, its frequency was attested 9 times between nominal and verbal items), now these paragraphs of the speech prioritize the country's total security under all aspects, such as (54) the improvement of its system and defence abilities, the public security governance and the social governance system.

(54) 要健全国家安全体系，增强维护国家安全能力，提高公共安全治理水平，完善社会治理体系

yào jiànquán guójiā ānquán tǐxì, zēngqiáng wéihù guójiā ānquán nénglì, tígāo
must perfect nation security system, strengthen defend nation security ability, raise

gōnggòng ānquán zhìlǐ shuǐpíng, wánshàn shèhuì zhìlǐ tǐxì
public security govern level, improve society govern system

‘we must improve the national security system, strengthen our capacity for safeguarding national security, enhance public security governance, and improve the social governance system’

Xi Jinping then continues by stating that the best way to effectively protect China’s priorities, namely its 主权、安全、发展利益 *zhǔquán, ānquán, fāzhǎn lìyì* ‘sovereignty, security and the development interests’ is by modernizing national defences and by building a strong military, also known as People’s Liberation Army, to resemble a 钢铁长城 *gāngtiě chángchéng* ‘great wall of steel’. Interestingly enough, this definition first appeared in the 5th and last session of the 12th National People’s Congress, that took place from the 5th to the 15th of March 2017, but wasn’t present in Xi’s second inaugural speech just a year later. It was also used to emphasize military modernization and sovereignty protection, but it was specifically targeted against the East Turkestan Independence Movement, also known as ETIM, in the autonomous region of Xinjiang, where Han Chinese live in close contact with the Muslim ethnic minority of the Uighurs and both experience regional social unrest (Ruwitch, Martina, Shepherd 2017).

Other than referring to the Chinese region of Xinjiang, the General Secretary also spends few words on the military reinforcement and sovereignty defence regarding the SARs of Hong Kong, Macao and the island of Taiwan. While the paragraph in question presents China’s same commitment to the "one country, two systems" policy, the same autonomy of Hong Kong and Macao and the same hopes at the reunification of the nation, the third inaugural address is more detailed in outlining specific actions that would promote national unity under all aspects, which is greatly accentuated already from the very first sentence of the paragraph, (55).

(55) 我们要扎实推进“一国两制”实践和祖国统一大业。

wǒmen yào zhāshì tuījìn “yīguóliǎngzhì” shíjiàn hé zǔguó tǒngyī dàyè.

1PL should solid promote one.country.two.system practice and country unify great.cause.

‘we should solidly promote the practice of "one country, two systems" and the great cause of national reunification.’

The actions in question include the implementation of the aforementioned policy in Hong Kong and Macao, their economic support and also the opposition to the separatist movements arising in Taiwan. These would trigger developments in the economy and in people’s life (改善民生 *gǎishàn mínshēng* ‘improve people’s livelihood’), prosperity, peace and overall stability, ultimately bringing people together. As discussed in the previous paragraphs, benefits such as national development and social stability lie at the base of the Chinese great rejuvenation: this concept is stressed by the verb 离不开 *libùkāi* ‘indispensable’, which literally means that the subject of the verb cannot leave something else. Prosperity and security, given by the government policies and

actions, are inseparable from the building of a better China and must stick together. The same strong connection, and its mandatory characteristic, can also be found in example (56).

(56) 实现祖国完全统一是全体中华儿女的共同愿望，是民族复兴的题中之义。

shíxiàn zǔguó wánquán tǒngyī shì quántǐ zhōnghuá érǎnǚ de gòngtóng
realize homeland complete unify be all China son.and.daughter DE common
yuànwàng, shì mínzú fùxīng de tí zhōng zhī yì.
desire, be nation rejuvenation DE question centre ZHI meaning.

‘realizing China's complete reunification is a shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation as well as the essence of national rejuvenation.’

The complete reunification is described as a 共同愿望 *gòngtóng yuànwàng* ‘shared aspiration’ between all Chinese people, meaning that all of them desire and need unity and that therefore it become as an essential core of the PRC rejuvenation. It goes without saying that this desire also strongly opposes to any Taiwanese separatist revolts and to any external interference in the Taiwan question: this dream originates from the many inconveniences that occurred during Xi’s second term, like for example the China-US Trade War, which is especially focused on Taiwan’s resources, and the 2022 visit by the speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (1940-) to the Formosa island.

Similarly to what has been already analysed in this rhetoric section, these two paragraphs as well count many modal verbs and adverbs, some of which were also present in the previous parts: there is still an abundance of the modal verb 要 *yào* ‘should, must’ because it reoccurs 6 total times. However, its meaning might now differ, because here the English translation suggests that people ‘should’ act in a certain way to build a greater China, therefore one might be more inclined to affirm that Xi Jinping is now talking about the population’s moral duties rather than their simple necessities, conveying a deontic modality. Reoccurring adverbs are 积极 *jījī* ‘proactively’, 全面 *quánmiàn* ‘comprehensively’, 准确 *zhǔnquè* ‘accurately’ and the idiom 坚定不移 *jiān-dìng-bù-yí* ‘unswervingly’ whereas new adverbial items are 更好 *gèng hǎo* ‘better’, which is used twice, 坚决 *jiānjué*, which means ‘resolutely’, and 扎实 *zhāshi* ‘solidly’ in example (55).

The last paragraph of the procedural argumentation reflects the PRC's decision to also prioritize its role and duties in the international community, such as for example advocating for mutual cooperation, peace, development, and a more inclusive and interconnected world.

«我们要努力推动构建人类命运共同体。中国的发展惠及世界，中国的发展离不开世界。我们要扎实推进高水平对外开放，既用好全球市场和资源发展自己，又推动世界共同发展。我们要高举和平、发展、合作、共赢旗帜，始终站在历史正确一边，践行真正的多边主义，践行全人类共同价值，积极参与全球治理体系改革和建设，推动建设开放型世界经济，推动落实全球发展倡议、全球安全倡议，为世界和平发展增加更多稳定性和正能量，为我国发展营造良好国际环境。»

«We must strive to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. China's development benefits the world, and China cannot develop itself in isolation from the world. We must solidly promote high-level

opening up, not only making good use of the global market and resources to develop ourselves, but also promoting common development of the world. We must hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, always stand on the right side of history, practice true multilateralism and the common values of mankind, **actively participate in** the reform and development of the global governance system, and promote the development of an open world economy. We should promote the implementation of Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative, so as to add more stability and positive energy to world peace and development and create a favorable international environment for our country's development. »

This passage conveys the Chinese full commitment to a shared future for humanity, which is detectable from the use of effective adverbs (57, 58) and verbs (58). 努力 *nǔlì* ‘with great efforts’ and 积极 *jījí* ‘proactively’ greatly stress the Chinese willingness in creating a bright future for the international community, advocating for collaboration and unity among nations to address global challenges collectively. The effort to collaborate is also given by the verb 参与 *cānyù* ‘participate’ as well as by the three times occurrence of 共同 *gòngtóng* ‘common’, once as the characters creating the noun ‘community’ and twice as the adjective describing the 世界发展 *shìjiè fāzhǎn* ‘world’s development’ and 人类价值 *rénlèi jiàzhí* ‘mankind’s values’.

(57) 我们要努力推动构建人类命运共同体。

wǒmen yào nǔlì tuīdòng gòujiàn rénlèi mìngyùn gòngtóngtǐ.

1PL must effort promote establish mankind future community

‘we must strive to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.’

(58) 积极参与。。。

jījí cānyù...

active participate...

‘actively participate in...’

As stated by the passage, common participation and engagement must be accompanied by principles of peace, development and mutual benefit, which are highlighted by the linguistic construction 高举...旗帜 *gāojǔ... qízhì* ‘hold high the banner of’ that is linked to the military conceptual domain in Magagnin’s article (2016: 357). The repetition of the 2-item Ngrams and modal verb 我们要 *wǒmen yào* ‘we must’, which is here used at least 3 times, strengthens even more the Chairman’s commitment to and China’s need to worldwide partnerships, multilateralism, global solidarity and common justice. All of these policies and strategies not only help China’s development, but also the whole world’s (59). In fact, the use again of the verb 离不开 *libùkāi* ‘inseparable’ suggests that China's development is not isolated but intertwined with the world's development and therefore stresses its dedication to international policies with the aim of not only benefitting from the global market but also contributing to its development, since China is the world’s second largest economy (Lin 2011: 2).

(59) 中国的发展惠及世界，中国的发展离不开世界。

Zhōngguó de fāzhǎn huìjì shìjiè, Zhōngguó de fāzhǎn libùkāi shìjiè.

China DE develop bring.benefit world, China DE develop inseparable world.

‘China’s development benefits the world, and China cannot develop itself in isolation from the world.’

Lastly, the President promotes active participation in modernising global governance structures (58), advocates for an open global economy, and supports global development and security efforts under the 全球发展倡议 *quánqiú fāzhǎn chàngyì* ‘Global Development Initiative’ or GDI, proposed in 2021 at the general debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (Xinhua News 2021) and the 全球安全倡议 *quánqiú ānquán chàngyì* ‘Global Security Initiative’ or GSI, proposed during the annual Boao Forum in 2022 (Rajagopalan 2022). The goal is again to achieve world peace, stability, and development while also establishing a favourable international environment for China’s growth. However, it’s interesting to point out that the Chinese noun for ‘initiative’, 倡议 *chàngyì* ‘initiative’, for now implies a suggestion or proposal rather than a concrete plan of action.

4.4.5 HORTATORY ARGUMENTATION

In the hortatory argumentation, the third inaugural address starts to approach to its ending. The main difference with the second inaugural address lies in its length: the former was formed by 5 main paragraphs, whereas here it is composed of only one, resulting in a shorter rhetorical agenda. Nonetheless, the excerpt is still able to prove the significance of internal governance within the CCP for impressive achievements of national goals.

«各位代表!

治国必先治党，党兴才能国强。推进强国建设，必须坚持中国共产党领导和党中央集中统一领导，切实加强党的建设。要时刻保持解决大党独有难题的清醒和坚定，勇于自我革命，一刻不停全面从严治党，坚定不移反对腐败，始终保持党的团结统一，确保党永远不变质、不变色、不变味，为强国建设、民族复兴提供坚强保证。»

«Fellow deputies,

To do a good job of governing the country, the Party should do a good job of governing itself; and to build a great country, the Party must be thriving. To promote the building of a great country, it is essential to uphold the leadership of the CPC and the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, and to step up Party building in a solid manner. We must remain sober-minded and resolved about addressing the challenges unique to a big political party as ours, and have the courage to carry out self-reform. We must unceasingly exercise full and rigorous Party self-governance, unswervingly fight against corruption, and always maintain the unity and solidarity of the Party. By doing so, we will be able to ensure that the Party will never change its nature, its conviction, or its character, which will serve as a strong guarantee for building a great country and advancing national rejuvenation. »

From the very beginning of the hortatory argumentation, Xi Jinping highlights the importance of governing the party itself as a prerequisite for effectively governing the People’s Republic of China (60). It stresses that a thriving and strong party is necessary for the country’s progress. This impelling prerequisite and necessity are both conveyed by two modalities, which again can be spotted in example (60). 必 *bì* ‘must’ stands for its longer version 必须 *bìxū* ‘must’, which was already found in this paper in chapter 3, and expresses the participant-external anankastic practical

necessity to do something. 才能 *cáinéng* ‘then B’ is part of the construction 只有...才能 *zhǐyǒu ...cái néng* ‘only if A then B’ and signals that the Party’s stability and prosperity are the fundamental conditions in order to build a great China and implement its rejuvenation.

(60) 治国必先治党，党兴才能国强。

zhìguó bì xiān zhì dǎng, dǎng xìng cáinéng guó qiáng.

govern.country must before govern Party, Party prosper then can country strong.

‘to do a good job of governing the country, the Party should do a good job of governing itself; and to build a great country, the Party must be thriving.’

The statement also underlies the necessity (61) of maintaining the Communist Party of China leadership high and the centralised, united leadership of the CCP Central Committee as critical to the country's building and growth. Once again, the feature of necessity of this action is given by the anankastic modality 必须 *bìxū* ‘must’. This feature and need are also promoted by the anankastic modal verb detectable in the forthcoming sentence of the discourse, 要 *yào* ‘must’.

(61) 推进强国建设，必须坚持中国共产党领导和党中央集中统一领导

tuījìn qiángguó jiànshè, bìxū jiānchí zhōngguó gòngchǎndǎng lǐngdǎo hé dǎng

promote strong-country build, must uphold China Communist Party leadership and Party

zhōngyāng jízhōng tǒngyī lǐngdǎo

Central.Committee centralize unite leadership

‘to promote the building of a great country, it is essential to uphold the leadership of the CCP and the centralized, unified leadership of the CCP Central Committee’

The hortatory argumentation, similarly to the previous rhetoric sections, counts quite few items used as verbal determinants. The adverbs 时刻 *shíkè* ‘constantly’, 永远 *yǒngyuǎn* ‘forever’ and the linguistic construction 一刻不停 *yīkè bù tíng* ‘cannot stop for a moment’ all better define the time of these policies and the way they must be implemented: to constantly maintain resolution when challenges must be solved, to unceasingly exercise the Party self-governance and to always make sure the Party maintains its fundamental nature, convictions, and character. The former promise, which, as said includes the adverbial unit 时刻 *shíkè* ‘constantly’, also comprises of two adjectives, used in the speech as nouns, which were never analysed before. These are 清醒 *qīngxǐng* ‘clear-headed’ and 坚定 *jiāndìng* ‘firm’.

Other adverbs used are the reoccurring 全面 *quánmiàn* ‘comprehensively’ and the idiom 坚定不移 *jiān-dìng-bù-yí* ‘unswervingly’, which now completes its four total occurrences. These adverbial units emphasize the CCP’s building and integrity, the commitment to a rigorous self-

governance, the fight against corruption and also highlight having enough courage to advocate for self-reform.

The last sentence of the hortatory argumentation, other than encompassing 永远 *yǒngyuǎn* ‘always, forever’, includes the repetition of the token adverb-verb 不变 *bù biàn* ‘do not change’ three times (62). With it, Xi Jinping tries to put on the spotlight the significance and necessity of maintaining intact the elements that describe and make the Chinese Communist Party unique, namely its core or nature, its beliefs and its spirit, which are all rooted in the Socialism with Chinese characteristics and help secure the establishment of and the revitalization in a better nation.

(62) 确保党永远不变质、不变色、不变味

quèbǎo dǎng yǒngyuǎn bù biàn zhì, bù biàn sè, bù biàn wèi
guarantee Party always not change nature, not change belief, not change character
‘ensure that the Party never changes its nature, its conviction, or its character’

4.4.6 SPEECH CONCLUSION

The conclusion of Xi Jinping’s third inaugural address conveys determination and motivation towards the ambitious goals of building a strong nation and achieving national rejuvenation:

«各位代表!

强国建设、民族复兴的宏伟目标令人鼓舞，催人奋进。我们要只争朝夕，坚定历史自信，增强历史主动，坚持守正创新，保持战略定力，发扬斗争精神，勇于攻坚克难，不断为强国建设、民族复兴伟业添砖加瓦、增光添彩！谢谢大家！»

«Fellow deputies,

The grand goal of building a great country and achieving national rejuvenation is encouraging and motivating. We should seize the day, remain confident in our history, exhibit greater historical initiative, uphold fundamental principles and break new ground, maintain strategic resolve, carry forward the fighting spirit, and **strive to overcome all difficulties**, to contribute to the great cause of building China into a great country and achieving national rejuvenation. Thank you.»

The President presents the two sentiments in a very particular manner. For the first time in this discourse, he employs two short sentences composed of four characters, 令人鼓舞 *lìng rén gǔwǔ* ‘encouraging’ and 催人奋进 *cūi rén fènjìn* ‘motivating’, as adjectival verbs, namely ‘encouraging’ and ‘motivating’, to describe the nature of the objective of establishing a strong China and achieving its rejuvenation. It’s interesting to point out that this last rhetoric section seems to focus deeply on infusing courage in the population, which does not appear to be the case in the second inaugural speech conclusion. Other than the adjectival sentence 令人鼓舞 *lìng rén gǔwǔ* ‘encouraging’, Xi also highlights this action of promoting bravery through the verb in example (63), 勇于 *yǒngyú* ‘be brave enough to’, in order to overcome challenges and obstacles.

(63) 勇于攻坚克难

yǒngyú gōngjiān kènnán
be.brave.to overcome difficulty
'strive to overcome all difficulties'

The 2 items N-grams and modal verb 我们要 *wǒmen yào* 'we must' is one last time repeated, but in this instance, it seems to express a duty or obligation, since it translates to the English modal verb 'should', therefore projecting a deontic modality. It opens the way to a series of actions that would contribute to the realization of the Chinese objectives, such as possess strong historical belief and take decisions based on what history teaches, adhere to tradition while pursuing innovation and foster China's distinctive fighting spirit; two of these actions following 我们要 *wǒmen yào* 'we must' are *chengyu*: 只争朝 *zhǐ-zhēng-zhāo-xī* 'to make the best use of one's time' and 添砖加瓦 *tiān-zhuān-jīā-wǎ* 'to do one's bit to help'. Overall, this statement asks fellow members of the National People's Congress and ordinary citizens, to be proactive, confident, innovative, and resolute to contribute to the establishment of a stronger China and the accomplishment of its rejuvenation.

4.5 INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS

This section will concentrate on the essential political components, values, context, objectives, means and actions presented in the detailed qualitative analysis of Xi Jinping's third inaugural address, delivered in March 2023 during the first session of the 14th National People's Congress. It focuses on China's internal status, background and ambitions, particularly emphasising on the Covid-19 epidemic, the 20th National Congress of the CCP, and its ties with Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Taiwan. Furthermore, it will better examine China's international position as well as its cultural and historical values that pervade current Chinese concerns.

4.5.1 DOMESTIC SITUATION AND MEANS TO REACH THE GOALS

The Covid-19 outbreak from 2020 to 2023 probably had a one of the most significant impacts in reshaping China's future and President Xi Jinping's rhetoric agenda. The pandemic accelerated previously established trends, such as the transition to a more technology-driven economy and a greater focus on self-sufficiency, which has already been mentioned earlier, and also strengthened China's emphasis on domestic consumption and economic resilience, discernible from the government's drive for dual circulation and promotion of the "internal circulation" and "international circulation" policies (Bates 2021). Covid-19 presented the chance to demonstrate China's crisis management capability and commitment to global leadership, in terms of President Xi's political agenda: his leadership narrative was strengthened by highlighting the CCP's role in efficiently managing the crisis, consolidating power and reinforcing the idea of a strong centralised government (Sciorati 2021: 80-87). The epidemic furthermore emphasized the importance of domestic control and stability, resulting in an increase of tight surveillance measures, which, were

seen as necessary by Chinese authorities considered the seriousness of the sanitary situation (Sales 2021:51-56). In the procedural argumentation, the speaker also emphasised the need of multilateralism and collaboration, which, during the disease outbreak was for example characterized by China's efforts to deliver medical supplies and vaccines to other countries (Missoni 2021: 98-100, 103-106): these actions were consistent with China's wider foreign policy objectives of increasing its worldwide influence and shaping the narrative around its response to the global pandemic.

We now shift the focus on the 20th CCP National Congress, mentioned in the transition to argumentation section, to highlight which policies, strategies and directions for the future have been chosen during the meeting to improve the People's Republic of China. After an introduction that outlines the results of the past mandate and the future needs and challenges of the new era, the report (Xi 2022) states the principles to attain to during the journey, like for example prioritizing the Party's leadership, the socialism with Chinese characteristics, the promotion of a development philosophy based on the citizens and the push forward of China's fighting spirit, which, we shall remember, also reoccurred in Xi's third inaugural address. Then, the report of the 20th CCP National Congress introduces all the policies and strategies to implement in various fields: the creation of a New Development Pattern and the pursuit of its high quality, the strengthening of the country through science and education, the advancement of a whole process people's democracy that guarantees the prioritisation of the population, the development of a law-based governance with the use of the rule of law, the improvement of the quality of life and of green solutions, the modernization of the military to safeguard the nation's security, the maintenance of the special policies for the SARs and Taiwan and lastly the promotion of world security and development.

In light of the last policy of the previous paragraph, in the qualitative analysis Xi Jinping talks about the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI) with the aim of gaining international consensus through the promotion of global development and security. The former's objectives are to gain a central role in the multilateral development promotion, by linking its activities to the United Nations policies, and to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (Fasulo 2022). These rely less on heavy construction projects, promoted during the BRI, but focus on pandemic responses, food security, poverty reduction, green development to counterattack climate change and digital economy, which are more sustainable and profitable projects (Wu 2023). The GSI is based on the notion of Comprehensive National Security, which is China's main security policy, and tries to transmit common security abroad, in order to draw the global security governance closer to the CCP's regime security goals (Greitens 2022). The expert also says that although the initiative is still in its vague development stage rather than being an already established policy, it might seek active collaboration with global security agencies, and send Chinese law enforcement abroad to offer police expertise with Chinese characteristics to foreign countries, with the scope of also amplifying China's global outreach.

4.5.2 XINJIANG, HONG KONG AND TAIWAN QUESTIONS

The last five years saw a quick regression in relationships between the central government and the autonomous Chinese region of Xinjiang, the SAR of Hong Kong and the island of Taiwan. It has been reported by Human Rights Watch (2021) that the CCP has been treating poorly the Muslim

ethnic groups and the Uighurs, who compose most of the population in Xinjiang. The report discloses major alleged human rights abuses, such as the existence of mass arbitrary “re-education centres”, the restrictions of freedom and privacy through extensive surveillance and forced labour, that, in their opinion, could at the end lead to cultural suppression and cleansing. It must be noted that Beijing to this day denies such allegations and describes the detention camps as schools aimed at withstanding terrorism and Islamic extremism. Notwithstanding the Party’s stance, these alleged abuses resulted in social dissatisfaction and unrests grew stronger during Xi’s second term, leading him to, as seen in the qualitative analysis, announce the construction of a “Great Wall of Steel” to maintain stability and security in Xinjiang (Jardine 2022: 144).

The great need of preservation of national stability and security, highlighted in the procedural argumentation, also stems from the troubled relationships between mainland China and Hong Kong. In 2019, during the Chairman’s second term, the proposal by the Hong Kong government to amend the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation Bill, that in simple terms regarded extradition, sparked protests all throughout the SAR (Leung 2019), because citizens worried that the amendment would erode Hong Kong’s autonomy and judicial system, founded on the ‘one country, two systems’ principle, allowing individuals to be extradited to the PRC, to be subjected to unjust trials and thus to put their human rights at risk (Chernin 2019). The demonstrations intensified when police response grew increasingly aggressive with the use of weapons, further fuelling public anger that, coupled with the Hong Kong government’s negligence, extended the protests into 2020 and escalated them into a larger pro-democracy movement: it encompassed various requests, such as increased independence from the Chinese Communist Party and an investigation into authorities’ misconduct. The Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress responded with the implementation of a new National Security Law, that would target “secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign powers” and would allow “the Chinese central government to establish its own law enforcement presence in Hong Kong” (Regan 2020), triggering discontent, civil crackdowns by the hands of police forces and later a massive emigration from the island (Wazir 2021).

The Chinese necessity to keep a firm grip on Taiwan, apart from a historical motivation, also arises unintentionally from the tense economic relationship between China and the US, part of which is going to be described in the following section; for years, the US has been providing the island with constant support in various sectors to counter the Chinese advance and this move is felt as a threat by the PRC. A central geopolitical role that Taiwan possesses in these relationships is when it comes to the so-called semi-conductor war between the two abovementioned major player.

The semi-conductor war encapsulates the competition and geopolitical and economic tensions between the United States, China and their companies over technological dominance, especially in the production and supply of semiconductors, also known as microchips. They compose all matter of devices, from cars, home appliances to smartphones, but the most advanced microchips are essential in the military field as well and it’s here that the tension forms (Miller 2023). The author explains that Taiwan becomes crucial from the 1990s, thanks to the great development of the largest semiconductor producing company, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), that not only transformed its country into the United States and China’s first choice for

cutting-edge chips, but also into the likely future battlefield to gain more control over these firms. Moreover, Miller reports that Tsai Ing-Wen (2021, cit. in Miller 2022: 342), the ROC President, believes that microchips are conceived as Taiwan's defense from aggressive attitudes: although the author says that is in part true, since the US military is incentivized to protect the island and its pivotal industry, he also states that it is precisely because of the importance of these integrated circuits, especially for the production of self-guided missiles, satellites and drones, that Taiwan risks of being attacked by China.

Another episode that undoubtedly is of diplomatic importance for Xi Jinping's third term was the visit by the speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to the Republic of China (ROC) in August 2022. The event sparked attention firstly because it marked the first time in 25 years that such a high-ranking U.S. government official stepped foot on the island and secondly because it fuelled further hostilities between China, the United States and Taiwan (Wang, Wong, Fan 2022). Pelosi (2022) stated that the aim of the visit "should be seen as an unequivocal statement that America stands with Taiwan, our democratic partner, as it defends itself and its freedom" and that "by traveling to Taiwan, we honour our commitment to democracy: reaffirming that the freedoms of Taiwan — and all democracies — must be respected". The speaker's visit triggered Chinese retaliatory actions against the ROC and the US, as well as responses from Indo-Pacific allies, such as Japan, Australia, South Korea and other ASEAN countries, that became all aware of the potential erosion of the region's security and stability (Blanchette *et al.* 2022).

4.5.3 INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

As already analysed from the beginning of the discourse, this inaugural speech crowns Xi Jinping as the People's Republic of China's President for the third consecutive time, but not without arising pressing criticism from Western observers; some of these concerns will be here showcased to build a balanced argument and foster the reader's own critical thinking.

Wolf (2022), for example, suggests that these additional five years might create many risks both for China, causing decay and fossilisation, and for the world, resulting in further hostility and more conflicts; analogously Schuman (2022), who is a journalist and an author with more than 25 years of experience in Asia, believes that it has become progressively difficult to predict China's future political, economic and social moves, given that its policymakers are completely subjugated to Xi's will and most pressing concerns, like self-reliance, Party's dominance and the Taiwan issue. Ulrich Jochheim (2022) in the European Parliament briefing on China's 20th Party Congress claims that specialists worry about possible signs that indicate a further breakdown of the idea of collective leadership within the Chinese Communist Party. They're attentive to indicators about the future course of China's economic, foreign, and health policies, since they fear that a continuous consolidation of power around Xi Jinping would have too big of an influence on China's policies in these crucial fields, perhaps limiting the diversity of opinions or decision-making processes within the Party. Furthermore, anxiety also stems from neighbour countries like Japan. The South China Morning Post (2022) reveals that Japan's anxiety about Xi Jinping's third mandate particularly revolve around the potential for increased regional tensions in Asia, economic competition, and the need to balance its relationship between the US and China in a

complex geopolitical landscape, that include the Taiwan question and rivalry in the digital currency and the semiconductor production.

In fact, the General Secretary's second term has been characterized by difficult geopolitical affairs with the United States and they most likely will shape the governance methods of his third term as well, hence the great focus on national self-reliance. Probably, the most relevant conflict between the two countries, still ongoing to this day, is the China-U.S. trade war. Started in January 2018, President Trump set tariffs on Chinese products and restrictions with the objective of blocking China to carry forward unjust commercial practices and to steal American intellectual property, causing Xi Jinping to take similar countermeasures as well (Sawnsen 2018). Even if an initial agreement was signed by both parties at the beginning of 2020, and even if the trade conflict resulted in a fiasco for both economies, Joe Biden (1942-), the United States current President, protracted the sanctions (Lee 2022). Basundoro, Abrar and Trystanto (2023: 42-43) confirm China's willingness to improve its economic self-sufficiency by reducing reliance on imports mainly in the technologic, energy and food sectors and by changing the development structure once focused on exports to now based on domestic consumption.

4.5.4 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUES

Xi Jinping also focuses his address on cultural values, like unity between all ethnic Chinese groups, and historical events to successfully define his country and enhance its economic environment, just like he did in the second inaugural discourse. As a result, although these last five years have been defined by uncontrollable modernization and relentless globalisation even more intensively than before, the president clearly desires to also invest on traditional traits, foster them into cultural strong points and ultimately place them at the basis of China's identity.

The only historical episode in the third inaugural address recalls the Century of National Humiliation. As already pointed out in the intermediate conclusion of the previous chapter, the Century of Humiliation in China, which spans from 1839 to 1949, was characterized by invasions by the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, the United States, Italy, France, Russia and Japan, as well as internal corruption, unfair treaties and various conflicts leading to territorial losses (Callahan 2004: 204-206). These include, for instance, the Opium Wars, the Sino-Japanese War, the Eight-Nation Alliance, and the Nanjing Massacre, all of which caused immense humiliation, shame, and a desire for revenge among the Chinese population. It resulted in the loss of reputation, honour and status among the international peers, which is something crucial in Chinese culture.

Despite the pain associated with this history, remembering these events is essential for building up a collective historical memory. As a matter of fact, Wang (2012: 225) claims that historical memory can be helpful for the definition of China as it is known today, because it gives rules for the Party's new membership, it legitimatizes the CCP and provides the deputies and the people with socially appropriate roles to perform. Moreover, the author also finds out that historical memory of traumas and humiliation, as well as past glories and symbolic myths, is a powerful tool form their national identity, hence helps unite citizens of different generations under a shared past, although part of them haven't experience it.

One must also note that China's use of historical events is usually very selective and might actually harm the country's progress. In fact, the PRC, in order to free itself from moral responsibilities and burden, seems to pick and choose which instances are better to forget and which ones can be exploited to serve to national propaganda (Ai 2014). About the specific example of national humiliation, Orville Schell (2016) thinks that China's habit of solely blaming Western powers can lead to distorted perceptions of the outside world, creates mistrust and insecurity in global relations, therefore damaging the decision-making process, and can hinder the ability to objectively evaluate China's real situation, resulting in an obstruction of reforms and developments that might be helpful but that are rejected because they possess Western features. Moreover, although Xi Jinping advocates for all ethnic groups and undeniably promotes historical and cultural values, it was shown in section 2 of these intermediate conclusions that the President seems to prefer a specific Chinese ethnic group, the Han people, at the expense of the others.

CONCLUSIONS

Chinese political language upholds a long-standing history of placing the Party and its goals first, regardless of the government changes or regardless of national and international obstacles. Simultaneously, it is an instrumental language since it enables the Chinese Communist Party to emphasise the importance of certain concepts over others. This is accomplished by presenting selected content, creating general consensus and agreement, moulding popular opinions, justifying choices and decisions and legitimising the government.

This dissertation's objective, through the analysis of Xi Jinping's second and third inaugural speech respectively delivered in 2018 and 2023, was examining how the Chinese Communist Party's manifesto and its main issues and ambitions have all evolved during the General Secretary's second mandate into the third one and how his political program is suggested and conveyed through his presidential oratory.

With the help of Sketch Engine, a corpus query tool which searches for all recurrent patterns of one or multiple terms in the corpus and then organises them, this thesis first provided a quantitative analysis that better collocated the number of modal verbs, verbs, adverbs, Sketch Engine's N-grams, or rather the smallest unit that a corpus can consist of, formulaic expressions, nouns and adjectives reinforcing metaphors and political concepts through occurrences lists. It was useful to analyse in depth this particular type of language, which components were the discourses, and more specifically the speaker, focusing on and what it revealed about the participants' viewpoints, attitudes, and power dynamics. Moreover, thanks to the dissection of the speeches into smaller rhetoric units, namely the introduction, the narrative, the transition to the argumentation, the procedural argumentation, the hortatory argumentation and the conclusion, in the qualitative analysis, it was easier to pinpoint where the abovementioned textual words were placed in the discourses and thus which of the section was preferred to convey promises, needs, the possibility or impossibility to fulfil the country's progress, the decisions citizens must uphold, and to encourage individuals to act in certain manners.

The Chinese government's constant intention to functionally conduct these inaugural speeches and their propaganda towards the realisation of the State's goals through a narrative that adapts to changes, occurring both within and outside the Chinese territory, appeared from the beginning of the work and was thoroughly analysed. In both discourses, Xi Jinping constantly and systematically employed a variety of textual elements: as explained, a part of them focused on grammatical forms and syntax, such as the extensive use of modals verbs, verbs, adverbs and Sketch Engine's N-grams tokens, while the others focused more on linguistic elements such as nouns and adjectives reinforcing metaphors and political concepts, formulaic expressions, *chengyu*, quotations taken from literature and traditional culture, and terms typical of the Socialism with

Chinese characteristics, often utilised with the aim of being revisited in a modern and current interpretation. By doing so, the rhetoric assimilated the needs and interests of the people and allowed the Party to portray itself as the only institution that possesses the means to satisfy its needs and solve its problems. The call to support the Chinese Communist Party, the need to create a shared morality, a collective will and common ideals were all recurrent propagandistic elements used in both inaugural speeches to ignite a strong sense of belonging to the nation, in order to ultimately collaborate to the achievement of the State's goals.

Both addresses, and therefore this research, focused on common themes in modern Chinese political discourse, such as the domestic and international situations, the means to reach the Party's goals, which can span from economic to social policies going via internal/external security and environmental laws, as well as themes discussing different types of Chinese values. What was interesting to note was the focus shifts on certain themes as the language responded to political requirements, which in turn altered as the setting changed: transformations and linguistic differences attested that the texts were manifestations of political changes. The comparison of the two texts also demonstrated the linearity and continuity of Xi Jinping's political agenda in pursuing key themes such as the Socialism with Chinese characteristics (中国特色社会主义思想 *Zhōngguó tèsè shèhuì zhǔyì sīxiǎng*), the Chinese dream (中国梦 *Zhōngguó mèng*), the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (中华民族伟大复兴 *Zhōnghuá mínzú wěidà fùxīng*) and the importance of sustainability in scientific and technological progress for the People's Republic of China's development.

The second and third inaugural addresses displayed both famous old policies connected with past presidencies and new elements characteristic of Xi Jinping's propaganda: Marxism-Leninism and Socialism are ideologies preserved as the backbone of the current CCP and of the Chinese society. The *socialist road*, discussed plenty of times, is the path that China must continue to follow in order to achieve its goals, because socialism has historically proven to be the proper way to take, even now that it has entered a new era. Moreover, the importance of tradition, be it philosophical, historical and/or cultural, was reconfirmed to have a grip on the Chinese population and was consolidated and manifested as a crucial instrument of consensus. As a matter of fact, the Chinese tradition provided a deep ideological and cultural tie and, for example, under the Chairman's leadership, Confucian and Daoist currents resurfaced, contributing to China's historical wisdom legacy. It allowed to the unification of the people and the legitimisation of the Party, which ultimately makes itself the ambassador of these principles.

Therefore, the Party must promote economic and innovative development while preserving Chinese cultural traditions. The economy is crucial for China's growth and its position in the world. Therefore, both speeches emphasised the importance of developing a modern socialist economic system, while at the same time continuing to deepen reforms in all areas. Xi Jinping also stressed the need to encourage high-quality scientific and technological development, as well as the need to increase openness to and collaboration with foreign countries, in order to keep up with the change of times and embrace modernity.

Both addresses highlighted China's commitment to the 'one country, two systems' policy, prioritising the autonomy of Hong Kong and Macao within the broader context of national reunification. The former stressed the stability and prosperity in the SARs, underlining their integral role in the country's development and supporting their integration into the national agenda. In contrast, the latter placed a stronger emphasis on achieving complete national unity by outlining specific actions, which, as it was discussed, might result from the delicate Taiwanese and Hong Kongese situations during the President's second term. It opposed any separatist activities in Taiwan, firmly rejected external interference, and highlighted the significance of national rejuvenation. While both speeches shared common principles, the second provided a more detailed roadmap, emphasizing unity and unequivocally opposing separatism in Taiwan, hence its deeper focus on internal security.

In essence, this research contributes to our understanding of the intricate interplay between language, politics, and power dynamics in contemporary China. It invites further exploration into the evolving nature of political discourse and its implications for the future. As China continues to navigate complex domestic and international challenges, understanding the communicative strategies employed by its leaders remains essential for a comprehensive analysis of the nation's political landscape.

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