

Politics of the “Global South”: China’s Narrative and the Indian Question

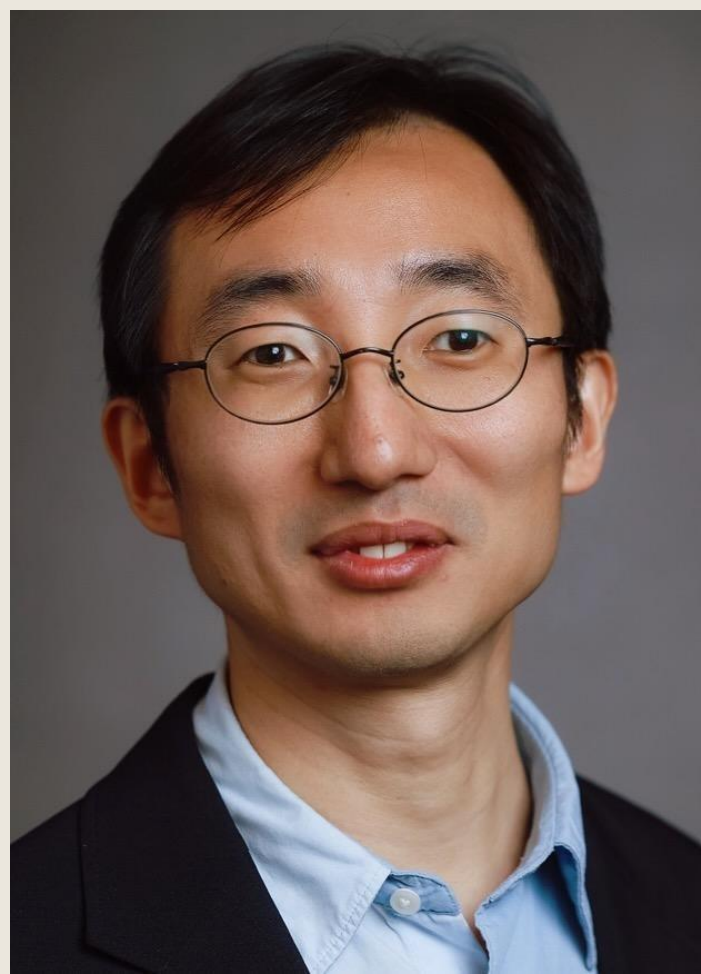
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Room 304 (3F), Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo

Zoom: [https://u-tokyo-ac-](https://u-tokyo-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/86173433157?pwd=eRv9CBKZU0EAEa73XpxOwW2RMtIYGV.1)

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Constructing the Global South: China’s Counter-Hegemonic Narrative Strategy Across State Media and Academic Journals

Yuan Zhou, Tomoko Takahashi, Raphaëlle Khan and Juan Acevedo-Ossa

Abstract: The rise of the “Global South” as a centerpiece of Chinese foreign policy discourse raises a fundamental question: does China invoke this label to describe a shared development experience or to advance a counter-hegemonic ideological project? We address this question through computational analysis of a dual-domain corpus comprising 3,635 state media articles from People’s Daily and Global Times and 557 academic papers from Chinese-language scholarly journals, spanning 2019 to 2025. Applying structural topic modeling, we identify twelve thematic clusters and demonstrate that geopolitical contestation with the West — not South-South solidarity or developmental partnership — constitutes the dominant organizing frame, accounting for 27.7% of corpus content. We further document a two-track discursive structure in which state media mobilize institutional coalitions through coverage of BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, while academic journals provide theoretical legitimation of the Global South concept against Western epistemological hegemony. The synchronous surge in both domains from 2023 onward coincides with BRICS expansion and escalating US-China tensions, suggesting coordinated ideational statecraft rather than organic intellectual convergence. These findings contribute to debates on strategic narrative, norm contestation, and the discursive dimensions of China’s rise.

Exogenous Voices and State Autonomy: China at the Nexus of Domestic and Global Governance of the Internet

Tomoko Takahashi and Daniëlle Flonk

Abstract: What does it mean to “listen to others” for incumbent governments around the world? This paper questions the idea of state autonomy from the viewpoint of incumbent governments regarding Internet governance, and tackles the puzzle that even autocratic countries, who prefer to constrain exogenous voices from their domestic constituents, are willing to promote global governance and amplify the voices of other countries at the international podium. This paper traces China’s narrative on Internet policies on both domestic and global governance since the technology became prevalent in the early 2000s until today. The triangulation of its narratives on both fronts using Chinese newspapers and documents in international organizations and fora reveals several things. First, the twist partly comes from the inherent structure of international politics; voices on the global stage do not strike the legitimacy of the incumbent government directly, as they are shielded by the idea of sovereignty. This is contrasted to its vigilance on the domestic sphere. Second, marginalized status drives the incumbent government to promote the multitude of global voices and counter-argue the dominant ones. This paper contributes to understanding the relation between exogenous voices and state autonomy that overarches arguments in comparative politics regarding democracy and those in international relations regarding norms. It also contributes empirically by process tracing the narratives of China in Internet governance.