

**SHAPING COLLECTIVE ATTITUDES:
CHINESE NARRATIVE OF THE
“CHINA DREAM”**

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Executive Summary

1. On semantics alone, the term “China Dream” or “Chinese Dream” could produce different interpretations that can be grouped into different categories. In the English language “China Dream” and “Chinese Dream” are different, with the former referencing China and the latter individuals.
2. Three most popular categories of interpretations are first, the “China Dream” as a collective dream (such as building and constructing a strong army and a rich nation, etc.).
3. Second, the “China Dream” as individual dreams cherished by individual Chinese, resembling to a large extent that of the American dream.
4. Between these two semantic interpretations, there is a middle ground, which is important and applies equally to both the “China Dream” and the “Chinese dream”. Both the state and society agreed that, to realise their dream, China must continue with reforms and (economic) development.
5. Technological platforms add a new dimension to widespread participation in shaping the China Dream narrative. It promotes individual ownership of the narrative, increasing one’s identification and affinity with the slogan.
6. In policy terms, the narrative consists of Beautiful China (clean environment and decreased pollution), Harmonious China (socioeconomic harmony, with some elements of the Hu Jintao administration’s *Xiaokang shehui*), Civilised China (the moralistic component of the Dream) and a Strong China (the component most associated with foreign policy and military strength).
7. The comparative element with the American Dream brings in a whole new dimension and discussion of how the two narratives interplay with each other. A *People’s Daily* article hinted at some complementarities of the China Dream with the American Dream.

8. After reaching a peak in exposure between 2012 and 2013, the China Dream narrative appeared to start a gradual decline in public exposure.
9. The most overt reason for the decreasing public exposure and mention of the China Dream is simply the appearance of other mass campaign slogans, including the One Belt, One Road slogan and references urging the Chinese public to treasure traditional virtues and value systems.
10. The China Dream narrative can eventually be shaped by traditional virtues and Confucian values that are almost universally accepted by Chinese societies with comparatively less controversy.