

# Analysis of State Governance Capability from the Perspective of Structural Functionalism: A Case Study of China's Policy on COVID-19

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## ABSTRACT

Fighting COVID-19 is the common responsibility of all countries in the world. At present, China has accumulated a lot of experience in fighting the pandemic and in the normal situation of pandemic prevention and control. In order to optimize the public health event management system, improve prevention and control capabilities, to China's emergency management system as the research target, using the method of "structure-function" theory, to explore China's economic, political, and social support system integration and culture model of operation mechanism, vent provides suggestions for further optimization of public health.

**Keywords:** national governance, Structural functionalism, pandemic prevention and control.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 exploded. Because the pandemic was sudden and difficult to treat, the virus spread quickly. On March 11, 2020, WHO announced that New Coronavirus had become a global pandemic and issued the highest level of alert. Tedros, the Director-General of WHO said on the same day that the COVID-19 has pandemic characteristics. This is a major test of the capacity of countries to govern. In China, all political entities, whether state organs of power, the ruling party, or governments at all levels, shoulder the heavy responsibility of containing the pandemic and protecting people's lives and safety. On the one hand, the state should fully mobilize medical resources to save the lives and health of those infected with the virus and properly handle the relationship between doctors and patients. On the other hand, the state should deploy a nationwide prevention and control system to prevent the spread of the pandemic and make efforts in community governance, pandemic prevention, social and cultural aspects to help dissipate the pandemic. Structural functionalism aims to clarify the interaction between the whole society and its organic components. It not only explains the functions of governance agents in the social system, but also provides an analytical theory to help us analyse governance actions in major public health events. In a country, pandemic prevention and control is faced with difficulties from all sides. It is possible to clarify the

relationship between all sides and analyse the existing prevention and control measures. Therefore, this article analyses the China's pandemic prevention practice, to examine the validity of pandemic prevention measures and its implementation in China. Furthermore, reveal the primary cause behind the pandemic prevention policy governance system with Chinese characteristics and provide a feasible path of governance for public emergency for other countries.

## 2. THEORETICAL BASIS

Sociologists naturally introduced biological research methods into sociological research. Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer put forward "the idea of social organism" on this basis and established the most basic principle of functionalism: society and biological organism are similar in many ways. Society has a structure just like a biological organism. Like the parts that make up a biological organism, the parts of a social system need to function in a coordinated way to keep society functioning. Based on this, Émile Durkheim, Radcliffe Brown, Malinowski, and others further developed the ideas of "social solidarity", "social integration" and "functional needs".

In the 1940s, the famous American sociologist Talcott Parsons aims to establish a highly comprehensive and universal system of sociological theory. He learned early sociologist holism thought and put forward the

“structural functionalism”. He emphasized that “the process of interaction [of individual actors] is viewed from a scientific point of view as a system and examined using theoretical approaches to the analysis of systems that have been successfully applied to other sciences.” [1]

The main connotation of structural functionalism includes three aspects: social action theory, model variable theory and structural function analysis. “Social action theory” is built on the basis of “general action theory”, and it pays attention to the mutual relations between each action unit and the environment, that is, the action system. The action system includes four subsystems: cultural system, social system, personality system and behavioural organism system. In the social system, the relationship structure between actors forms the basic structure of the social system, namely the social structure. Actors in the social system are connected with the society through social identity and social role. [2] The institutionalized identity and role complex are the social system. Model variable theory is a typological tool used by Parsons to distinguish the subjective orientation of actors in the course of action, and in the analysis of social system, it serves as a unique typological tool to describe social relations and distinguish social structures. Through this theory, the subjective orientation of actors is linked to the structural type of social system, which indicates that the focus of Parsons' theoretical analysis has shifted from social action to social system.

Based on the first two theories, he put forward the analytical method of structural function, and analysed a series of important theoretical issues about social system from the perspective of structure and function and their interrelation. It subscribes to the belief that social institutions and social conventions can be explained in terms of their function in maintaining the larger social system. It regards the society as a whole composed of various parts, and each subsystem plays its due role in the survival of the whole and guarantees the benign operation of the society with its unique functions. Through horizontal functional analysis in the Social System, Parsons attributes the social system's ability to maintain and continue itself to four functional conditions: adaption is that the social system allocates the resources obtained from the environment to adapt to changes of external environment; Goal attainment is to set the goals of the system, determine the order of the goals, integrate resources and mobilize social members to ensure that the goals are maximized; Integration is to play a coordinating role among the various parts of the system to build an integral whole that can play a practical role; Latency is the basic pattern of maintaining the common values of a society and keeping it institutionalized within the system. They correspond to four social systems: the “economic system” performs the function of adaption, the “political system” performs the function of goal attainment, and the “cultural system” performs the function of latency, which is his famous “AGIL functional model” [3]. There are a

variety of input-output exchange relations between the social system and other systems, as well as among the subsystems of the social system, through which the social order is structured, and the dynamic balance of the social system is formed.

In short, structural functionalism refers to the view that every social custom and institution is regarded as an organic part of a larger social whole, and that each part serves one or more functions for the whole.

### **3. CHINA'S MEASURE TO THE PANDEMIC**

Parsons' structural functionalism is the concept of “systems”. For him, “system of action” refers to what he calls a permanent system of interaction between “actor” and “environment”. China's pandemic prevention and control policy is not static, but flexible with the changing environment and actual conditions. This paper divides it into two stages.

#### ***3.1 The period during which the virus is discovered***

Although the source of novel coronavirus has not yet been identified, China was the first country to publicly report on COVID-19 and the first to confront the pandemic. When personnel mobility was extraordinarily strong. Therefore, it was extremely important to carry out pathological prevention and treatment and prevent the spread of the virus. In the early stage, the virus was so aggressive, and its spread was so unclear that it posed a severe challenge to the city's medical system. After the tremendous pressure on the medical system, China has explored some feasible and practical treatment measures, gathered experts, scholars, and medical personnel throughout the country, and deployed a large number of medical resources to treat patients of all levels. For severe pneumonia cases infected by COVID-19, the hospital strictly implemented the principle of “centralized patients, centralized experts, centralized resources, centralized assistance” [4], and arranged the most powerful medical force and medical institutions for medical treatment. According to the advice of the government, the hospital has further strengthened the strength of the fever outpatient department, emergency department, respiratory department, critical care department and other key departments, and strengthened the supply of medicine and materials for personnel. Each province has set up a provincial-level expert group for medical treatment of severe cases, which organized expert consultations in a timely manner and formulates effective medical treatment plans. According to the severity of the disease, different patients were treated with graded treatment measures. The central government immediately included the COVID-19 into the Class I infectious diseases prescribed by the “Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Treatment of

Infectious Diseases” and took measures to prevent and control Class II infectious diseases. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 have been included in the management of quarantinable infectious diseases stipulated in the “Frontier Health and Quarantine Law of the People's Republic of China” to control the transnational spread of the disease.[5] In addition, China immediately issued the protocol for the diagnosis and treatment of Coronavirus infection to guide the national scientific standard to do a good job of COVID-19 case diagnosis and medical treatment work.

When the COVID-19 raged in Wuhan, there was a shortage of available hospital beds and medical resources. The Wuhan municipal government has launched an emergency plan to build two temporary hospitals, namely Huoshen Mountain hospital and Leishen Mountain hospital. China Telecom Corporation (CTCC), China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and other state-owned enterprises were committed to ensure the supplies of electricity, net, oil, gas, and other productive resources. Various administrative agencies and state-owned enterprises cooperated with each other, and the public followed the construction online in real time. Finally, the hospitals were built in nearly ten days and thousands of patients were treated in two months. All communities implemented comprehensive sealed control management. In terms of material support, the central medical reserve allocated all kinds of emergency relief materials to Wuhan to meet the needs of Wuhan's medical supplies, and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its counterpart provinces and cities also provided daily supplies for Wuhan citizens.

In the early stage of pandemic prevention and control, hospital staff, various state institutions, communities, volunteer services and civil rescue teams efforts worked closely together, and several heroic figures and touching deeds emerged. Through the continuous dissemination of information on the pandemic, people all over the country were closely following the progress of the pandemic.

### ***3.2 The period of regular prevention and control***

Before this period, the spread of the local pandemic in China, with Wuhan as the main battlefield, had been basically blocked, but sporadic cases and the risk of local outbreak still existed. A global pandemic was still a complex and grim situation, so it was necessary to keep a clear mind and not be taken lightly. With the clearance of Wuhan and the gradual elimination of locally confirmed cases, China's COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control trend has further consolidated, and the prevention and control work has turned from an emergency to a regular situation. According to the guidelines issued by the State Council, the overall strategy of normal pandemic prevention and control is “guarding against imported cases and preventing a resurgence of the outbreak at home”. Focus on prevention,

timely detection, rapid treatment, precise control, and effective treatment, and highlighted the prevention of key places and key groups. At the same time, specific prevention and control policies have also changed, and resumption of work and production has become an important goal in addition to pandemic prevention and control.

It is necessary to provide targeted guidance and precise measures. So, in order to accurately distinguish potentially dangerous areas and promote the resumption of work and production in other areas, the regions are divided into low-risk areas, medium-risk areas and high-risk areas according to the severity of the pandemic. Low-risk areas have implemented the strategy of “guarding against imported cases” to fully restore the order of production and living. At the same time, the government has been required to actively support enterprises to resume production and help them solve problems in labour, raw materials, capital, and equipment. In medium-risk areas, the strategy of “preventing import from outside and preventing proliferation from inside” has been adopted to restore normal production and living order as soon as possible. The government has encouraged producers to organize people to return to work in an orderly manner, and instructed enterprises to carry out disinfection, ventilation, temperature measurement and other prevention and control measures while resuming work and production. High-risk areas will continue to focus on prevention and control of the pandemic with the strategy of “preventing proliferation from inside, preventing export for abroad, and strictly controlling it”. Meanwhile, they should ensure the normal operation of pandemic prevention, public utilities, businesses that are essential to people's livelihood, and other businesses that are important to the national economy to minimize the damage caused by the pandemic while adhering to regular prevention and control measures. Quarantine measures have been gradually standardized, with different schemes for different groups of people. People from overseas and high-risk areas generally follow the “14+7” quarantine policy, which requires intensive medical observation for 14 days, followed by 7 days of community health monitoring or home quarantine measures to strictly prevent the spread of the virus. During the traditional Spring Festival in China, there is a huge flow of people returning home. The government has formulated an effective return inspection system. With the implementation of the policy, the country has gradually shifted to a low risk level.

During this period, medical progress in prevention and control has also provided a solid guarantee for the control of the pandemic. In order to normalize pandemic prevention and control, it is necessary to be able to screen and identify infected people to carry out necessary quarantine and treatment, so nucleic acid testing is crucial. With the increasing sensitivity of nucleic acid testing

reagents, the shortening of testing time, the increasing automation of testing equipment and the increasing variety of testing products, nationwide nucleic acid testing has been widely achieved in China. Since the early days of the pandemic, China has attached great importance to the research and development of COVID-19 vaccine. From the acquisition of antigens and animal experiments to clinical trials and marketing approval, China has been leading the world level, and has been actively exploring effective solutions to novel coronavirus. The safety and effectiveness of the Chinese COVID-19 vaccine has passed the test. Currently, China is carrying out a nationwide vaccination program to build an immune barrier, and the cost of the vaccine will be fully borne by the country. For example, Ruili city took emergency measures to complete the nucleic acid screening of all residents within two days and planned to vaccinate all residents against COVID-19 within five days, which effectively contained the spread of the virus.

In the period of regular prevention and control, in addition to the need to prevent re-outbreak of the virus, the resumption of work and production has become another problem facing the whole society. By April 1, 2020, 98.6 percent of China's large-scale industrial enterprises had started production, and more than 80 percent of small and medium-sized enterprises had resumed production [6]. In 2020, the central government issued four times of special anti-pandemic Treasury bonds totalling one trillion CNY, which were used to support the small, medium and micro enterprises, individual businesses and poor people hardest hit by the pandemic, as well as local economic recovery and public health infrastructure construction. In order to stabilize employment and ease the burden on enterprises, the government has increased the proportion of unemployment insurance refunds. For medium and micro enterprises that did not lay off employees or have few layoffs, the refunds can be up to 100 percent of the unemployment insurance premiums paid by the enterprises and their employees in the previous year [7]. Small and micro enterprises, in particular, had greatly expanded their coverage. In order to promote and increase employment, the government encouraged enterprises to actively organize free online training for their employees, supported enterprises to carry out skills training for their employees, and opened all functions of the "China Vocational Training Online" platform to provide training and teaching resources free of charge. At the same time, the government also actively advocated the way of flexible employment and gave certain preferential treatment and subsidies to vendors without fixed business sites, flexible employment personnel, platform employment personnel and so on. In terms of tax policy, the state promptly introduced policies to reduce taxes and fees. At the same time, measures such as extending the tax payment period, delaying tax payment, and speeding up the export tax rebate were

taken in accordance with the law to alleviate the financial constraints of enterprises in an all-round way.

#### **4. ANALYSIS OF CHINA'S ANTI-PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM**

According to the policy review, we can see that China has implemented many unique practices in the actual operation of fighting the pandemic, which is behind the deep institutional regulation and social and cultural background. From the perspective of structural functionalism, these policies and social and cultural backgrounds can be analysed.

China's state structure and system fully reflect this. China's historical reality and cultural tradition require that China establish and maintain a strong central government that is conducive to effectively responding to large-scale challenges. But at the same time, under the premise of unified government decrees, China's governance must consider the reality of various regions, adapt measures to local conditions, and reduce the cost of governance, so as to facilitate the economic development and cultural prosperity of various regions. Therefore, local governments should be given some loose disposal power. In preventing the spread of the COVID-19, the country should have the ability to take into account the interests of the whole country and even the whole world, and even to require the severely affected cities to close during festivals, which is the overall control of their internal systems. In addition, the country should have the capacity to deploy supplies throughout the country, thus ensuring that supplies are met in the worst-affected areas. Each province and city have also given the largest support to the pandemic area according to its own advantages and characteristics, reflecting the strong adjustment ability of the organic whole.

In structural functionalism, every action system, whether central or local government, state, or community, presents four subsystems with four functions. The "economic system" performs the function of adapting to the environment, the "political system" performs the function of achieving the goal, the "social community system" performs the integration function, and the "cultural system" performs the function of maintaining the mode.

The function of adapting to the environment performed by the "economic system" need to be realized by the cooperation of various market entities. State-owned enterprises, as the leading force in China's economy and an important pillar of China's economy, have played an absolute role in economic supply and shouldered a large amount of support responsibilities in the pandemic prevention and control. China State Construction Group completed the construction mission of Huoshen Mountain hospital and Leishen Mountain

hospital in only 10 days. The research and development of the inactivated virus vaccine from China National Pharmaceutical Group was among the first to market a new crown vaccine in the world. The refining factory of China Petrochemical Corporation temporarily changed their main production schedule to produce medical polyolefin. Most of the treatment was done by public hospitals. At the urging of the government, many private manufacturers have also stepped in to produce protective clothing, face masks and medical equipment. The mutual complementarity and cooperation between state-owned enterprises and private enterprises have effectively solved the problem of relative shortage of rescue equipment, medical resources, and protective materials, and provided a solid material foundation for the whole society to adapt to emergencies. In addition, many Internet companies, by giving full play to their technological advantages and innovative sales models, have played an important role in trans-provincial and transnational allocation of pandemic prevention materials and supply of daily necessities, and formed many high-quality e-commerce services, takeout, and logistics platforms, which have met the daily needs of citizens.

In the political field, the practice of pandemic prevention and control has fully demonstrated China's institutional advantages and its ability of achieving the goal. According to Parsons' AGIL diagram, the political system is the function of implementing goals. Local governments at all levels have also set up "pandemic prevention and control headquarters" to take charge of important decisions, news reports and emergency management related to the pandemic prevention and control in their regions. Therefore, China has formed a complete information transmission and decision-making implementation system from top to bottom and from the central to the local level to complete the major tasks of pandemic prevention and control. The Communist Party of China (CPC) is the core of political leadership in China. The CPC Central Committee formulated pandemic prevention and control strategies in a timely manner, and immediately established the "Central Leading Group for Response to the Pandemic" to study, deploy and mobilize the pandemic work. Timely research has solved key problems in pandemic prevention and control, material support, scientific research, resumption of work and production, and cross-border imports. The primary organizations of CPC are the closest to the people, the frontline of pandemic prevention and control, and the battle fortress of pandemic prevention and control. Lofty sense of responsibility of CPC members, efficient organizational ability and advanced service measures are the basis for ensuring that the tasks and objectives of pandemic prevention can be resolutely carried out and successfully completed. In times of emergency, CPC members courageously went to the front line and were the vanguard in the pandemic prevention and control. In

the early days of the pandemic, there was even a risk of death on the frontline of the fight against the pandemic. More than 40,000 Party members, cadres and workers in Wuhan went down to more than 3,000 communities and carried out multiple rounds of dragnet, blanket, and net inspections to ensure that no households were left missing. This is because democratic centralism is an important organizational principle within the CPC, that is, "Individual party members are subordinate to the party organization, the minority to the majority, and the lower level to the higher level." Party members scrambled to take an active part in the prevention and control work, effectively driving the masses from all sides.

In the social field, communities, public welfare organizations, individual citizens and other types of subjects have actively participated in the fight against the pandemic, reflecting the integration function of the social system. Community organizations and workers in urban and rural areas are the main executors of the pandemic prevention and control work. At the start of the pandemic, the community autonomous organization for the first time integrated the residents group leaders, grid administrators, realty service enterprise staffs and volunteers into the pandemic prevention work of their own community. They did a lot of basic work, such as distribution and coordination of daily supplies to meet the necessary demand of residents. Meanwhile, many medical assistances work, including comprehensive screening of infected people, nucleic acid testing of key personnel, distribution of pandemic prevention and medical supplies, and regular disinfection, were their duties. Sometimes they also assisted the police to manage the floating population in the community, took care of the elderly, left-behind children and the disabled from their community, and provided online psychological support, emotional counselling, pandemic prevention knowledge publicity and other social services. In the social system, NGOs also play a crucial role in pandemic prevention and control. They can be extended to the minutia of pandemic prevention and control and are an effective complement to the rescue efforts of state authorities. Based on their professional skills and strengths, different types of social welfare organizations have played a distinctive role and actively assumed social responsibilities. For example, the NGO Blue Sky Rescue Team actively organized team members and volunteers to use professional equipment and vehicles to set up many public teams in different cities and participated in preventive disinfection services in crowded places in many areas. In addition, people from all walks of life have been following the progress of the pandemic prevention and control. They have actively donated money and materials and made rational use of the prevention and control materials, thus creating a favourable social environment for fighting the pandemic.

In the cultural field, through news reports, films and television, people have learned about the pandemic prevention policies and the development of the pandemic

and have felt the impact of the pandemic on social life. Everyone has deeply appreciated the courage and sense of responsibility shown by doctors, nurses, civil servants, community workers and volunteers in the face of the pandemic. Through active publicity and positive public opinion guidance, the government enables people to identify more with the core values of the society, thus making the society more united and orderly in the face of difficulties. Academician Zhong Nanshan is the leading figure in the fight against COVID-19. At the early stage of the pandemic, he led the team to Wuhan and put into treatment. His prevention and control strategies and measures have saved countless lives. He has been on the front lines against COVID-19. On September 8, 2020, China held the "National Conference in Recognition of COVID-19", and Zhong Nanshan was awarded the "Medal of the Republic". Zhang Boli, Zhang Dingyu and Chen Wei who also played a crucial role in fighting the pandemic have been awarded the honorary title of "The People's Hero", which fully embodied the country to make a significant contribution to the medical work in the pandemic of the recognition and praise highly. By shaping the disease resistance heroes and propagandizing their heroic deeds, there would be benefits to solidarity and citizen education. TV dramas, film, and documentaries with the background against the pandemic emerged in endlessly. Directed by Wu Hao, the documentary "76 Days" recorded some touching stories that happened during the 76 days of the Wuhan blockade. Medical personnel, civil servants and ordinary citizens worked together to fight against COVID-19. It has already been named on the list of the 93rd Oscar for best documentary. And the TV series "With You" has recorded 10 stories which happened in the process of fighting the pandemic, through artistic processing and adaptation, shaping the admirable civilian hero collective representations, and triggered the resonance of the majority of the audience.

## 5. SYSTEM EVALUATION

Parsons' theory of action can be considered as a kind of compromise among various social theories. Parsons believed that objective reality can be related to only by a particular encounter of such reality and that general intellectual understanding is feasible through conceptual schemes and theories. He said "all knowledge which purports to be valid in anything like the scientific sense presumes both the reality of object known and of a knower. I think we can go beyond that and say that there must be a community of knowers who are able to communicate with each other." [8] China's extensive social practices in responding to COVID-19 have given play to the theoretical core of theory of action and transcend all possible erroneous thoughts in scientific prevention and control.

The first is the transcendence of idealism. According to Parsons, the wrong viewpoint of idealism is that it

ignores the behaviour to some extent subject to the constraint of external environment and emphasizes the purpose of action to an extreme extent. Therefore, anti-idealism in social action maintains that "in examining social phenomena, one must observe reality and not involve one's imagination, otherwise one cannot know the truth." [9] This code of conduct has been well practiced in China's anti-pandemic practices. The sudden pandemic first affected Wuhan. After considering the existing medical and living resources in Wuhan as well as the national resources, the central government made the decision to "close the city" and sent a guidance team to Wuhan to conduct anti-pandemic command and decision-making. On the one hand, medical resources were limited in Wuhan at that time; on the other hand, pandemic prevention methods and measures were not completely determined. So, the existing medical resources could not realize the reception and hospitalization of all patients. Under such objective conditions and actual conditions, the existing material resources in Wuhan were integrated for medical treatment. For example, the Huoshen Mountain hospital and Leishen Mountain hospital, which were built in only 10 days, were specially designed for the treatment of patients with COVID-19. At the same time, it took three weeks to build 16 mobile hospitals, with a total of 15,000 beds to treat patients, which made available more beds than the number of new patients. Because of these integrated measures, the pandemic in Wuhan was under control quickly and all the patients were isolated, treated and treated in an orderly and effective fashion. What is more, under the call of the central government, a nationwide mobilization "Support Wuhan" was launched, and other provinces and regions gave full support to Wuhan, providing medical resources and living supplies. Since the first medical team arrived in Wuhan on January 24, a total of 345 national medical teams and 42,600 medical personnel from 29 provinces and military systems have been dispatched. In order to ensure the normal life of the people of Hubei, donations of living materials from all over the country have also gathered in Wuhan. In addition, in the fight against this epidemic, the government has not only concentrated its superior medical resources and technical forces to treat the patients, but also taken fully into account risks in all aspects of socio-economic life. They paid close attention to the needs and problems of the masses to meet their basic needs and monitored the supply and price of primary goods in real time to maintain market order. The decision to close the city was not subjective, and the medical treatment requirements were not based on pure emotional incentives but based on objective considerations and material security.

Second is the transcendence of positivism. Parsons' structural functionalism is substantially different from the earlier functionalism of Malinowski, Radcliffe Brown, and others. He insists that positivism social science is

limited, because pure positivism thinking is difficult to know the essence of human action and it neglects the symbols that are relatively independent in the field of work. In the war against COVID-19, the Chinese people have done the utmost to control the pandemic at the fastest speed and protect the safety of people's lives and property to maintain social stability. In this process, the role of culture and symbols was indispensable. On the one hand, traditional Chinese cultural values have been well integrated into the anti-pandemic process. China's various anti-pandemic measures also reflected the profound heritage and powerful strength of the Chinese civilization. "The people are the foundation of a country, and when the foundation is strong, the country is in peace." Since ancient times, China has adhered to the philosophy of people-centred governance, which is also the purpose and mission of the CPC. In the National Conference in Recognition of COVID-19, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphatically stressed: "In front of protecting people's lives, we must do whatever it takes, and we can do whatever it takes." Facts have proved that the pandemic prevention and control mechanism that put people first and life first could contain the spread of the disease most quickly and effectively. As a Chinese saying goes, "No clothes, one must be clothed with one's son." This fully embodies the fine tradition of the Chinese nation of uniting with one heart to overcome difficulties. At the height of the pandemic in Hubei, warriors from all over the country came to the rescue. They came from different places, but they all worked for the same goal. They could not see each other's faces under their medical protective gowns, but they were methodical and coordinated. Every citizen receiving civic education, as also a warrior for pandemic prevention, could voluntarily wear a mask, conduct quarantine at home, and cooperate with pandemic prevention and control work, showing a great spirit of solidarity. On the other hand, the CPC and state institutions have taken the initiative to carry out propaganda and education activities, which have provided guarantee and support for the fight against the pandemic. In the fight against the pandemic, the Party and the government have not only made scientific decisions based on facts, but also carried out a lot of cultural construction work, to ensure that the people of the whole country had the right to know the latest situation of the pandemic and at the same time could make the correct pandemic prevention behaviour. In the early stage of the pandemic, cultural publicity activities were mainly embodied in the forms of pandemic prevention leaflets distribution, news reports on excellent deeds, and network publicity by new media, which were decentralized, unidirectional and informal. In the normal and regular period, mainly positive publicity, there have been more diverse forms of culture construction activities, and the content have also been more extensive, such as holding the "National Conference in Recognition of COVID-19", selecting China's inspirational role models and so on. These activities, by publicizing the people who

have made great contributions to the fight against the pandemic and their outstanding deeds, guide the direction of public opinion and rally people's support, which plays the role of value cultivation and cultural education.

In addition, China's anti-pandemic policy also reflects the value of social and human nature, beyond the simple utilitarian view of interest balance. A good structural function cannot respond to the social internalized value with an instrumental attitude. During the period of rapid development of the pandemic, some countries tend to treat all patients selectively due to insufficient hospital beds, inadequate wards, and severe shortage of medical equipment. Old people, for example, were often forced to forgo treatment because they were perceived as having limited contributions to society, and because it was difficult, risky, and survival rates are low. But the aged are also vulnerable and at high risk for COVID-19, so many of the deaths occurred in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes. However, China's pandemic prevention measures have always adhered to the principle of "check all the cases, collect all the accounts receivable, treat all the cases, and not lose one person". So far, Hubei Province has successfully cured nearly 4,000 COVID-19 patients over 80 years old and 7 patients over 100 years old, including several elderly patients with severe disease who were rescued from death. A 70-year-old man suffering from COVID-19 was saved by more than 10 medical workers for dozens of days. The treatment cost was nearly 1.5 million yuan, all borne by the state. As General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "Every life has been fully protected, and human life, human value and human dignity have been carefully cared for." Besides, the government and many social organizations have actively provided necessary and timely help and comfort to the isolated elderly, children in need, the disabled and other special groups due to the prevention and control of the pandemic. At the same time, the patients, and their families, especially the families of the deceased patients have received psychological counselling and mental intervention. The aim of these measures is to ensure that awareness of prevention, life assurance, and residents' emotional relief have been in place, which put humanistic care into more people's livelihood. This is because "cost-benefit analysis" and "efficiency principle" are not the highest pursuit in China's response to the pandemic. It is an important principle of national governance to ensure the life and health safety of the people. That kind of all-out effort, including a commitment to the elderly and families in need, is hard to achieve in many other countries. China has been able to do this because it has been striving to meet the people's expectations for a higher level of medical and health services. It has gone beyond utilitarianism to ensure the safety and health of the people at all costs. This fully demonstrates the political philosophy of the CPC and government institutions to put the people first and govern with the people.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Parsons' action theory is universal. Each action system contains subsystems with different functions. At the same time, as a new action system, subsystems have their own subsystems, just like Russian dolls. Therefore, when the COVID-19 pandemic is viewed from a global perspective, China is a sub-system of the world system, and the actions of different countries influence each other. Since the industrial revolution, the process of globalization has been further accelerated, and the development of globalization has brought many opportunities to countries, but also brought a high degree of uncertainty, thus forming a risk society. The wide spread of this pandemic proves that the virus knows no borders and that all countries in the world are united in weal and woe. In the global fight against AIDS, China has repeatedly put forward the concept of "a Community of Shared Future for Mankind". It is a political initiative that based on a deep understanding and high warning of risk interconnection and risk clusters. It is also a new approach with a solid scientific foundation to build a sustainable and vibrant world. On medical rescue, China released the coronavirus gene sequence information, diagnosis, and treatment plan at the first time, and communicated with many countries and international organizations to carry out the pandemic prevention and control activities more than 70 times. China have opened the online knowledge centre of pandemic prevention and control to all countries, to share experience in control and prevention with no reservations. At the same time, in the early days of the pandemic, China sent more than 20 medical teams and donated a large amount of medical and relief materials to areas severely affected by the pandemic and underdeveloped economically. In the normal phase, by March 2021, China have been providing vaccine assistance to 80 countries and three international organizations. Besides COVID-19, geopolitical landscape instability caused by the global turmoil, threats to economic stability and social cohesion, looming climate crisis and accelerated loss of biodiversity, the digital divide and network inequality which threaten the health of the global economy development, and health care system have become the common risks which have affected almost all countries and regions in the world. To address these global risks, countries must work together to enhance global governance capacity and develop international solutions to major public health emergencies and other global problems.

Based on the perspective of structural functionalism, this paper comprehensively summarizes China's policies and measures in the COVID-19 pandemic, systematically and visually demonstrates the different roles played by the Chinese government, society, and citizens in the fight against the pandemic, and deeply analyses the reasons

why China has been able to quickly contain the pandemic. In general, the economic system, the political system, the social system, and the cultural system have played their respective roles in the prevention and control of the pandemic, and can cooperate and complement each other, forming a set of systematic, complete, and effective mode for the prevention and control of the pandemic, and providing China's solutions for major public health events.

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