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‘CHINESE VALUES’ IN OFFICIAL SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF PRC: RE-INVENTION, RE-APPRAISAL OR A DISPLAY OF PERSISTENT NATURE OF CHINESE SOCIO-MORAL HERITAGE?

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Abstract

In recent years, socio-political discourse in China has been loaded with the notions that despite their ‘socialist’ qualifier, deeply resemble once disregarded Confucian values. The somewhat complicated history of the relationship of Confucianism and Communism in China raises a question about the motivation for such a move and feasibility of such endeavour. In search of the motivation behind the recent re-appraisal of the Chinese socio-cultural heritage, this paper will first briefly summarise the history of the demise of traditional values in the official socio-political discourse of the ‘New China’. Subsequently, by tracing the origins of the values that are fundaments of the notions of ‘Harmonious Society’ and ‘Core Socialist Values’, it will attempt to demonstrate how deeply the new official discourse is involved with a previously disregarded axiology. In the final section, it will argue, that re-appraisal of ‘Chinese Values’ is not a re-invention, a replacement of or supplement to the previous ideological framework, but rather a display of dialectical and persistent nature of Chinese socio-ethical cognition. In other words, propagated values, are not just a mere fabrication utilised for political purposes, but also an outcome of an ‘internal logic’ of Chinese culture, that can be summarised as “the eternal dance of *Yin and Yang*”.

Keywords: Chinese values, Harmonious society, Core socialist values, China intangible cultural heritage, Chinese modernity

Introduction

The dramatic socio-political changes of the 19th century faced Chinese elites with an urgent question about the reasons for the demise and final dissolution of the Empire. For conservatives and moderate reformers, the foreign invasion and laxity in the realisation of Confucian values were first to blame. New intellectuals that emerged in the meantime had more radical views in this respect. Since the last dynasty, facing internal and external pressure fail to rule the state and protect it from the external invasion, for the new intellectuals Qing court and the socio-political system of the Empire became the main culprits. For many of them, the ‘foreign’, Manchurian origin of the last dynasty became one of the main determinants of Qing’s corruptness and impotence. Manchus were then not only ‘immoral’ and ‘incapable’, but also ‘alien’ and as such, were to be deposed and replaced with Han, the ‘real Chinese’.

However, as new political and intellectual elites were soon to realise, over-emphasising the distinction between the Manchu and Han, could lead not only to overthrowing 'foreign' Qing but also to ethnic conflict, regional separatism and territorial fragmentation. Not only Manchus but also Mongols and a large population of Chinese Muslims becoming victims of 'Han chauvinism', could feel unwelcomed in a new, post-imperial settlement (Harrison 2001, 136-144). Moreover, despite the efforts of the ruling dynasty to preserve the elements of Manchu culture, the Manchus and the Han were very much alike in terms of cultivated socio-ethical values and did pertain to the same socio-political and linguistic reality of the Empire (Harrison 2001, 133-136). It became apparent to more-comprehensively thinking intellectuals that the ideological and socio-political system of the previous over two thousand years had a way more significant impact on the society and its values than the fact that the dynasty ruling the Empire was not 'native'. Not free from oppression and cultural racism, the hierarchical system built according to the principles of politicised Confucian ethics had determined not only the family structure but also the entire political and economic structure of the society. By state-sanctioned rules regarding family relations, the Empire was empowering heads of families, equally Manchu, Han, and even Mongols, that on their behalf were more than happy to act towards the preservation, and 'fossilisation' of the system (Wang & Zheng 2015, 268; 274-275). In the eyes of new intellectuals, Confucian socio-ethical family-state interdependence led to corruption, moral decay, intellectual stagnation, and, in consequence, to backwardness and final dissolution of the Empire.

The inception of the Republic in 1911 did not bring an immediate remedy, and the old structure did not disappear overnight. Instead, weak, politically and the military, Republic had to give in to the rule of the strong man of the time, Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916), who tried to legitimise his rule by the appeal to the old order. After Yuan's failed attempt to restore the monarchy, China witnessed further instability and progressing external pressure. Soon the entire socio-ethical system based on Confucian values was under attack again. The iconoclasm of the May 4th (五四 *Wusi*) and following New Cultural Movements (新文化運動 *Xin wenhua yundong*) was about to become the most apparent embodiment of the struggle against the old order (Liao 2008). The proponents of the 'New China' called for the complete abandonment of the old values and establishing new, free from the past flaws, society. Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936), Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) and Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) were amongst those who denied the validity of the entire system and put the fundamentals for the 'New China' (Lin 1979). Despite the ultimate failure of the May 4th Movement, the call for a profound re-evaluation of the ethics and socio-political system did not disappear from the socio-political discourse of upcoming days.

With the establishing of the People's Republic, that tendency gained new ideological support that soon was about to go way further than any time before. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,¹ initiated by Mao Zedong, was a direct descent of the iconoclasm of the May 4th Movement. The (in)famous campaign to 'Destroy

1 (*Wu chan jieji wenhua da geming* 無產階級文化大革命 1966 – 1976)

the Four Olds and Cultivate the Four News',² marked the first peak of China's struggle to eradicate 'tradition' and establish 'a new society'. As one examines the content of the related documents that led to radical actions, the same mode of thinking that pushed revolutionaries of the early 20th century against the tradition and traditional values emerges. The aims of the Cultural Revolution were supposed to be achieved by eradicating everything that was considered to be an exemplification of the old socio-ethical and political system (Macfarquar and Schoenhals 2006, 115-131). The 'Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution', passed by the Party's Central Committee on 8th August 1966, known later as 'Sixteen Points', stipulated that despite all the achievements of the revolution, the remains of the old (bourgeois) ideology and authority are still influential powers that do correspond with a new (socialist) reality, and even preventing it from further development (Huang 2013, 73). As such, they should be denounced, criticised, and eradicated. Mao himself in his speeches and writing encouraged young Red Guards (*hong weibin* 紅衛兵) to radical action by criticising the limited commitment of the old cadres to the revolution and prevalence of the youngsters in a struggle for a 'better word' (Liu 2000). The rhetoric used for dissemination of revolutionary thought and practices was very similar to the one used by ideologues of May 4th Movement, only more radical and more severe in consequences. Social frustrations and political struggle were then dealt with handy tools of denouncing, labelling and final destruction of individuals, groups, practices and even architecture as 'old, traditional and reactionary'. The denial of tradition reached its second peak between 1973 and 1975 with the Anti-Confucian Campaign during which Confucian tradition has been singled out as the source of reactionism and corruption of deposed cadres (Goldman, 1975; Gregor and Chang, 1979).

Once the Cultural Revolution was over, and especially after Mao's death and only two 'internal' shifts of power not accompanied by any 'substantial'³ ideological change, many policies have been reverted. Deng's 'Reforms and Opening Up' marked not only political and economic relaxation but also the beginning of a new approach to Chinese cultural and ethical heritage. Chinese values were not only gradually embraced by the authorities but soon have become an integral element of the official socio-political discourse. Especially after Hu Jintao assumed his office (November 2002), notions such as 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'⁴ and 'Harmonious Society' (*Hexie shehui* 和諧社會) became an indispensable element of the state-sponsored ideology. With Xi Jinping as a paramount leader (November 2012), this tendency towards re-appraisal and incorporation of traditional values into the official discourse has been further strengthened. The question is why these, not other values have been added to the 'revolutionary thought' of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping and even, indirectly, written into the Party constitution? What is the actual importance/place of these values

2 (*Po siji li sixin* 破四舊立四新)

3 By 'substantial' I mean replacement of one leading ideology by another. The significant changes under Deng do not qualified as such since Deng has never renounced communism as a state ideology.

4 (*Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi* 中國特色社會主義)

in the official socio-political discourse, and how do they correspond to the tradition, denied validity by the revolutionary movements of the 20th century? In a word, is this recent re-surface of 'Traditional Chinese Values',⁵ under different names, a re-appraisal, re-invention or maybe a display of persistent nature of Chinese socio-moral heritage?

Chinese Characteristics and Harmonious Society

The notion of 'Chinese characteristics' was introduced to the socio-political jargon of CCP at the 13th CCP National Congress (25th October to 1st November 1987), where Zhao Ziyang delivered the report 'Advance along the Road of Socialism with Chinese characteristics' (Li 1995, 399). The main point of Zhao's speech was to point out that China is in a 'primary stage of socialism', and as such socio-economic and ideological programme of CCP requires some modifications. For Zhao, and Yu Guangyuan (1987), the main author of the concept of 'Economy in the Initial Stage of Socialism',⁶ the principle objective was to adopt a socialist economy to the Chinese everyday reality. For Jiang Zemin, who soon was about to become CCP General Secretary, on the other hand, socio-economic reforms were not the sole concern. Besides enhancing the economy and development of 'high ideals', to develop discipline and high-level education were not less important. Even though all these notions were usually modified by the adjective 'socialist', the strong connotation with Confucianism and moral heritage of China was becoming more than apparent. The first most notable official reference to Confucian thought was made by Jiang Zemin himself as early as in 1989. He did not only refer to Confucius as one of the great thinkers of the past but also recommended Confucian thought, after necessary 'appropriation', as a source of ideas for the future (Chan 1993, 20). Confucianism, and in a broader sense, entire Chinese cultural heritage was officially given a place in the further ideological development of CCP. However, it was after Hu Jintao assumed the office when a more comprehensive than previously shift in the ideological stanza of the Party was observed. As the previous leadership focused mostly on embracing the market economy, making just occasional, and still quite limited ideological adjustments, Hu's administration went further with its appeal to the Chinese moral heritage as a crucial element of the notion of 'Chinese characteristics'. Amongst three main slogans characterising Hu's rule, 'Harmonious Society', 'Peaceful Development' and 'Scientific Development', the first of the three, bears a clear trace of Chinese, Confucian but not only socio-moral heritage, and as such is worth our attention here.

Harmonious Society, was integrated into the official CCP ideological programme after the conclusion of the Sixth Session of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP as the 'Resolution on the main aspects of the construction of a harmonious socialist society', was formally approved (Solé-Farràs 2008, 20). For some, the *Resolution* was comparable to the European Renaissance since 'by discovering harmony culture, China

5 (Zhongguo chuantong jiazhi guan 中國傳統價值觀)

6 (Zhongguo shehui zhuyi chujing de jingji 中國社會主義初級階段的經濟)

[similarly to Europe in the past] is [re]discovering its own rich ancient cultural harmony traditions.' (Fung 2006, 8). In October following year, the word 'harmonious' (*hexie* 和諧), was added to the Party's Constitution, redirecting the focus of the party programme. In the new version of Party's Constitution, CCP has become a force leading "the people of all ethnic groups in a concerted, self-reliant and pioneering effort to turn China into a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious modern socialist country". (Solé-Farràs 2008, 21). The newly introduced notion of harmony meant to indicate the idea, and practice that is a base for attaining the goal of modern, at least moderately well-off society with cultural, political and administrative guarantees that improves people's morality and creativity. The main goal is then a stable association of humans bonded with this supreme value that is presented as leading to the higher good of further improvements. As it sounds like a reasonable amendment of the basic lines in the Constitution of the ruling Party, it begs the question about its origin and compatibility with the core values of Communism. Why the notion of harmony was picked as an answer to the new challenges that China undoubtedly was, and still is facing, and how, or rather why it fits the other principles of the CCP's ideological position? To fairly understand this issue, it seems necessary to trace back the origin of the notion of harmony *he* 和 as the very basic concept for further ideological adjustments of CCP.

The very notion of 'harmony' has obvious Confucian connotations and is extensively discussed in the Classics (Yang, 2005). The Book of Documents (*Shujing* 尚書), the Book of Songs (*Shi jing* 詩經) and the Discourses of the States (*Guoyu* 國語), another notable text of early Confucian tradition, all make the notion of harmony into one of the central ideas of their discourses. In the Classics, it is associated with the Way of Heaven (*Tian dao* 天道) and as such also as a prescribed Socio-Moral Order of Humankind (*Ren dao* 人道). Not only that. Being a socio-moral principle, it is also an aesthetical standard (Shi 2005, 22). As the notion closely associated with the Way of Heaven, it is the condition that allows for myriad things to arise, develop, and continue to exist without ceasing their individuality. The Discourses of the States then declares "Harmony is a source of a multitude of existence, 'uniformity' (*tong* 同) is a way towards discontinuation⁷ (*Guoyu*, Zhengyu).

Harmony does not indicate full unity without distinctions but is an ontological, and moral principle. Thus, it, on the one hand, presupposes ontological pluralism, on another – onto-moral co-existence of differences (Sundararajan 2015, 25). This mode of thinking about *he* was later developed by Xunzi that believed that "Myriad of things live/exist by attaining their (individual) harmony"⁸ (*Xunzi* 17.3). Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 similarly emphasised, "Harmony, Heaven and Earth give rise to it"⁹ (*Chun Qiu Fan Lu* 77.1). As the above instances bear a strong ontological flavour, two verses from the *Analecets* shed more light on the socio-moral aspect of *he*. "In the practice of proper

7 (Fu *he shi sheng wu, tong ze bu ji* 夫和實生物，同則不繼)

8 (Wanwu *ge de qi he yi sheng* 萬物各得其和以生)

9 (*Hezhe, tiandi zhi suo sheng cheng* 和者，天地之所生成)

ritual, harmony is to be cherished”¹⁰ (1.12), on the one hand, emphasises the necessity of standard rules of behaviour and socio-political system that for Confucius was ideally represented by the “etiquette and rituals of the Zhou dynasty”¹¹ (*Analects* 3.14). On another, it points out the necessity of ‘harmonisation’ of interactions between humans through proper communication, mutual understanding and mitigating possible conflicts. It is also an indicator of the desired state of social affairs that means morally sanctioned co-operation and co-existence of inevitably different elements. Through ‘harmonisation’ the conflict is being eradicated, and the society with everyone living according to the prescribed way of one’s status (*zhengming* 正名), willingly following rules of interactions between individuals and groups (*li* 禮) is established. Such a state would be then a state of the ultimate harmony, resembling the heavenly order (*tiandao* 天道). It is worth noting that Confucius, similarly to the Discourses of the States, emphasised the difference between harmonisation and uniformisation. As the *Analects* reads “The Exemplary Man is harmonised, but not uniformised, whilst a Petty Man is uniformised but never harmonised”¹² (13.23). The Exemplary Man (*junzi* 君子) is the one that can accommodate and negotiate differences towards a common end that is the state of no-struggle and peaceful co-existence without elimination of plurality of elements.

Conversely, the Petty Man (*xiaoren* 小人) is after establishing a state of complete uniformity by elimination, not an appropriation of differences. The tension between the notion of harmony understood as a balanced co-existence of differences that work towards a certain establishing quality, and uniformity, a state without differences, was then apparent even to the pre-Qin thinkers. There was a conscious effort in Confucian thought to make this distinction clear, which makes us think that it was, and might still not be that obvious. Harmony and uniformity as the ideal types might be distinct notions; however, as practical prescriptions might not be that far apart.

The presence of the notion of harmony is, of course, not limited to Confucian writings. It appears already on the oracle bones (Shi 2005, 15), and is a frequent topic of pre-Qin philosophies. Zhuangzi, one of the pillars of Daoism, distinguished two forms of harmony, the harmony with (of) the nature and the harmony between men¹³ (*Zhuangzi*, *Tiandao* 1). Following Zhuangzi insists on the universal harmony of the myriad of things, including men¹⁴ (*Zhuangzi*, *Tiayun* 3). The Mohists and Legalists do also appreciate the value of harmony. The *Hanfeizi*, for instance, declares, “Mind the harmony of *yin* and *yang* whilst undertaking any action”¹⁵ (37.12). The *Mozi*, on his behalf, emphasises that “Mutual love between father and son is expressed in benevolence and piety, mutual

10 (*Li zhi yong, he wei gui* 禮之用，和為貴)

11 (*Zi yue: Zhou jian yu er dau, yu yu hu wen zai! Wu cong Zhou!* 子曰：「周監於二代，郁郁乎文哉！吾從周。」)

12 (*Junzi he er butong, xiaoren tong er bu he* 君子和而不同，小人同而不同)

13 (*Yu tian he, yu ren he* 與天和，與人和)

14 (*Tai he wanwu* 太和萬物)

15 (*Ju shi shen yin yang zhi he* 舉事慎陰陽之和)

love between brothers is expressed in 'harmonious adjustment'".¹⁶ The appreciation of ontological harmony (*yin-yang*) and social cohesion, seems to be a common theme of pre-Qin schools of thought, that only differ in a prescribed way of its attainment.

The significance of *he* has never been limited to the works of the ancient thinkers. In the 20th century, so-called New Confucianism, for instance, tried to revitalise and adopt traditional values to contemporary society. The New Confucians then summarised harmony as a comprehensive, universal, dynamic nature of reality that is based and presupposes diversity and denies uniformity (Solé-Farràs 2008, 22). The notion is also well-established in the social perception of modern Chinese (Chen and Starosta 1997, 6). It seemed then an obvious choice for the regime trying to solidify its power while facing internal and external pressure to employ notions like 'harmony' as a new ideological driving-force. It took only removing one, although essential principle out of its ideological position, literally the class struggle to make already deeply affected by traditional thought Chinese Communism (Tian 2005) furtherly compatible with Chinese socio-moral heritage. Seeking for securing its position as the ruling force, CCP could then, on the one hand, make an appeal to the commonly shared consciousness, on another establish itself as the sole guarantor of this shared experience. It could be summarised as 'what we stand for is what we all share, and only with us standing for this we can keep it'. Even in the light of all socio-economic challenges that many Chinese faces every day, such a position can hardly be openly opposed.

The Core Socialist Values as the Current Expression of Chineseness

The further exemplification of 'Chinese values' in contemporary China can be found in an ideological campaign that took the stage after Eighteen Party Congress and Xi Jinping ascension to leadership in November 2012 (Mahoney 2014). The Core Socialist Values,¹⁷ published in February 2014 is a set that consist of prosperity (*fuqiang* 富強), democracy (*minzhu* 民主), civility (*wenming* 文明), harmony (*hexie* 和諧), freedom (*ziyou* 自由), equality (*pingdeng* 平等), justice (*gongzheng* 公正), the rule of law (*fazhi* 法治), patriotism (*aiguo* 愛國), dedication (*jingye* 敬業), integrity (*chengxin* 誠信) and friendship (*shanyou* 善友) (Kallio 2016, 428). Spread through banners, posters and multimedia ads under the CCP Propaganda Department (CCPPD) and the Central Guiding Committee for Building Spiritual Civilisation (CGCBSC) (Brady 2006, 60-62) despite the emphasis on 'Socialist' can hardly be classified as a reminiscence of socialist/communist ideology in its more classical form. As the whole, they are also not an exemplification of modern western liberalism. Michael Gow might be right claiming that the notion of Core Socialist Values is another mean of preserving CCP's hegemony, that in Gramsci's sense rests not only on coercion but more on the social consent attain through the range of consensus-building activities (Gow 2016). However, even it is hard to disagree with Gow on his application of the

16 (*Fu zi xiangai ze cixiao, xiongdi xiangai ze litiao* 父子相愛則慈孝, 兄弟相愛則和調)

17 (*Shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi guan* 社會主義核心價值觀)

Gramscian notion of hegemony in the Chinese context (Gow 2016, 3-4), the motivation behind selection particular values as ‘core’, seems to go slightly beyond the political pragmatism aiming perpetuation of the regime. Taking into account the recipients of this state-sponsored message, it seems that Party does not just simply choose notions fitting their agenda and through these ‘consensus-building activities’, and “armoured by coercion” (Gramsci 1992, 263) turn the set into an undeniable for an average citizen “common sense” (Gow 2016, 4-5). Kallio’s constataion that “...the Communist Party, faced with the widely lamented ideological and spiritual vacuum within the Chinese society, launched a dedicated project to formulate a new set of values to guide the people. Chinese traditional schools of thought provide a good foundation for this, and they also appeal to the people’s national pride” (2016, 428), encapsulates another dimension of the whole endeavour. A closer examination of Classics shows how deeply the Core Socialist Values are involved with Chinese traditional schools of thought. Not only the whole project resemblances the strategies used for similar purposes in the past, what Kallio succinctly argued for (2016, 429-433). To one’s surprise, most of the notions presented as the Core Socialist Values are directly present in pre-Qin and Early Han era literature. Even though some of the set of twelve are more some less often discussed, in general, virtually all of them can be found somewhere in the classical texts of Confucianism, Legalism, Daoism or Buddhism.¹⁸

The first one in the line of twelve, prosperity (*fuqiang* 富强(彊)) appears in Confucian classics only once. In the *Xinshu*, there is then a verse in which The Middle Kingdom is being praised for its self-relying strategy against Huns, which allows the first one to become prosperous when its opponents, the Huns had to vanish (*Xinshu*, Book 3, Jiexian 3). However, in the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 the classic text of the Legalists, the notion is widely present. For instance, in one of the verses, the emperor of Qin is being praised for adopting Shang Yang’s legalist approach that led to the prosperity of the state (*Hanfeizi* 13.3). In another, Hanfei insists that the enlightened ruler that can ensure the prosperity (of the state) can attain what he desire/success. Thus, it should follow the (legalist) rules of governing, that lead to the state prosperity (*Hanfeizi* 47.6).

Another Core Socialist Value that is present in Classics is civility (文明). Especially in Confucian writings, it is a widely discussed concept. In *Liji* 禮記, civility is understood as an elegant and brilliant display of affections, and it is paired with the abundant presence of “the energies of nature” (*qi* 氣) that possess the mysterious/spiritual transforming power (*Liji*, Yueji 33). It is then a prescribed standard of coping with and displaying ideas and emotions. However, at the same time, it is accompanied by the transformative power of *qi*, the energies of nature. Civility is then not just a restrictive/curbing standard, but it is a result and facilitator of further display of the original energies. It is not the element separating culture/civilisation and nature, but a term denoting the dialectical or somewhat organic relation between the two.

As mentioned above, the notion of equality (*pingdeng* 平等), is also not foreign to the Chinese mind, even though term as such is not a part of Chinese indigenous traditions. In a strict sense, it is a term that has been adopted from Buddhist scriptures where instances are

18 Since the notion of harmony has been already discussed, it will be omitted here.

abundant and in no small degree resembles the notion of equality in Western philosophy (*Samyukta-āgama*, 雜阿含經 15.14.402). However, there are two significant distinctions. As for the Western mind, equality presupposes the lack of socio-moral difference between humans, for Buddhism, this applies to all sentient beings (*Avatamsaka-sutra*, 大方廣佛華嚴經 7.8.2). On the other hand, it also emphasises the ultimate identity of the mode of existence of a myriad of things (*Avatamsaka-sutra*, 1.1(4)1). In other words, equality does not always mean the equal moral capacity and social rights of every human but rather presupposes the original equality of all forms of existence. It can be equalised with the law of nature, the natural state of affairs that does not exclude apparent differences, and even inequality. Since all forms are equal by nature, the forcible eradication of evident disparities would be a negation of the original equality of the myriad of things. The notion of equality can also be found in Daoist tradition. However, it is expressed by 'complementary unity' (*Qi yi* 齊一), that refers to interdependent and illusory nature of oppositions/extremes, sameness in another way. It has slightly more speculative than normative flavour (*Zhuangzi*, Outer Chapters, Tianyun 3).

Of the quite a few verses mentioning the notion of justice (*gongzheng* 公正), two are worth special attention. The first one that comes from the *Analecs* reads as follow 'The Master said, "The duke Wen of Jin was crafty and not upright. The duke Huan of Qi was upright and not crafty."' (Legge, 1861).¹⁹ Being 'upright', or in another words 'fair and impartial' is an opposition of being 'crafty', or 'sly and cunning', and it is the feature that should characterise the ruler. For Confucius, that is the feature of the governing power that should be cherished and extolled. Another verse worth attention comes from the *Xunzi*, and it extols appreciation of justice impartiality and uprightness, in opposition to what he calls a "vulgar dispute", as a feature of discourse by a scholar and an exemplary man.²⁰

The Rule of Law or application of certain standards (*yi fa* 以法) is another notion, which, despite its obvious legalist connotation, is also present in Confucian Classics. For instance, *Liji* contains a verse in which it is stated that if these standards (法) are applied in governing, goodness prevails and the conduct is moral (*Liji*, Yueji 24). To no one's surprise, Confucians are seeking eternal sanction for applying *fa* and make a direct appeal to the moral order and morally good outcomes of a certain action. Hanfeizi, on his behalf, is more pragmatic, pointing out to the practical dimension of *fa* application, stripping it of 'divine' sanction. He then gives *fa* far less moralising flavour, by claiming that governing a state by the rule of law is simply applying proper means, using the right tools in the craft of government (*Hanfeizi* 26.1). These two approaches even not entirely compatible, both represent the same awareness of the necessity of rules and their enforcement for the successful government. Confucians and Legalists alike find the notion of the Rule of Law not only be a plausible but the desired mean of governing.

19 (*Zi yue: Jin Wengong jue er bu zheng, Qi Huangong zheng er bu jue* 子曰：「晉文公譎而不正，齊桓公正而不譎。」) (14.15)

20 (*Gu neng chu dao er bu er, duo er bu dou, li er bu liu, gui gongzheng er jian bizheng, shi shijunzi zhi bianshuo ye* 故能處道而不貳，咄而不奪，利而不流，貴公正而賤鄙爭，是士君子之辨說也) (22.12)

Two of the ‘personal level values’, patriotism (*aiguo* 愛國), dedication (*jingye* 敬業), are not extensively discussed in the Classics. However, there is one instance of *aiguo*, which is particularly worth noticing. In Pre-Han Record (*Qian Han Ji* 前漢紀) dated from 198-200, Xun Yue (荀悅, 148~209), advising on the matter of good governance makes an appeal to *Yjing* and *Chunqiu*. Listening all the virtues of the good rulers of the past, he points out that the good ruler control all of the dukes (*hou* 侯), desires to treat the people as his own children and love his domain/country (國), like family (*Qian Han Ji*, Xiaohui Huangdi Ji). Xun Yue seems to be quite aware of the corruptibility of the system, so he advises the ruler to limit the power of dukes, and other officials in general. Subsequently, he seeks warranty for a just system in an appeal to the family-like affinity between the supreme ruler and the people and the equation of affection towards family and the state.

Two other values of the ‘personal set’ are integrity (*chengxin* 誠信) and friendship (*shanyou* 善友), are widely present in the Confucian, but not only Classics. Especially the first one that appears as many as fifty-two times in the Classics seems to be of great importance to the pre-Qin thinkers. *Liji* then extols sacrifice of the Virtuous One (*xianzhe* 賢者), as conducted with the ultimate sincerity and venerating faithfulness. It then a sign of perfectness and a characteristic of a filial son (*Liji*, Jitong 2). In *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳, sincerity is the characteristic feature of the friends of the Virtuous man (*shanzhe* 善者), and presumably of his friends as well (Book 9). *Chengxin* seems to have then two aspects. On the one hand, it is an internal imperative of one that makes the attitude and the action of his genuine and establishes the one as a Virtuous. On another, *chengxin*, it is a characteristic of the relation between the Virtuous one and his peers. *Youshan*, on its behalf, is another personal quality that seems to be of the utmost importance to the sages of the pre-Qin era. Confucius, for instance, emphasises that the ones with the lack of *youshan* is a characteristic of the harmful acquaintance (*Analects* 16.4). For Xunzi however, when picking people for the official position, those characterised by *youshan* cannot be approached without care, since the actual choice should be made on the basis of one’s morals.

Discussion: Core Chinese Value: Harmony as Symmetry

As we can see, the values presented in the current discourse as ‘socialist’, are not just a set of carefully selected prescription of proper behaviour for citizens. They are not, with maybe one exception of freedom (*ziyou* 自由), values of modern liberal state either. It is not to say that they necessarily contradict modern social values. In principle, they could be adopted in most of the modern liberal societies. In this respect then, they are not merely a mean of establishing ‘hegemony’ over the people, but they are well rooted in Chinese philosophical and moral tradition notion. As I tried to demonstrate, the exact wording, with a quite similar meaning, can be found in Chinese classics. Moreover, only selected cases of exact wording has been presented, when numerous examples of similar values expressed with just one of the character, for instance, *he* and *hexie* had to be omitted. I then do not try to deny the fact that the current regime uses the set of values for its own political purposes because it does. What is crucial here, though, is the fact that what the current regime tries to appeal to, is nothing new. It is

not a new socio-moral reality created for political purposes; even it is often presented with the qualifiers such as 'new era', 'new', 'modern'. It seems quite apparent that the main topics in the discussion have been selected from the vast spectrum of traditional values. It then marks a turnover in the official socio-ideological position of the Party. Sticking to the communist/socialist identity, it builds its legitimacy on the appeal to the tradition! The purpose of such a move might be, as Gow pointed it out, to affirm CCP's rule in China. Appeal to harmony and traditional values, called for the sake of consistency 'socialist', might be a handy tool leading to imposing a hegemony of the ruling class. However, these values being borrowed from the Chinese Classics, as I tried to demonstrate above, seem to be well embedded in Chinese 'deep structure'. Moreover, these values do promise a social consensus that is meant to prevent the domination of an individual social unit over others. It is undoubtedly happening at the expense of the full, unrestricted expression and expansion of different units. However, this restriction is not only a limitation of one unit but also a factor guaranteeing the preservation of another. In other words, even if an appeal to tradition means hegemony, it is framed as a promise of no-hegemony. It is an alteration of the well-known Daoist principle of "achieving equality by leaving things uneven" (*Bu qi er qi* 不齊而齊) (Ma 2016, 73), the 'dialectics' that is taking its roots in *Yijing* 易經 had infiltrated even Chinese communists thought (Tian 2005). Harmony is then a re-establishing of symmetry and then set of values mentioned above, no matter if we call them socialist, or traditional,²¹ is a framework allowing for the sustainability of the system. It goes hand-in-hand with holistic thinking characterised by two attributes, "(a) a high dimensional conceptual space; and (b) forming sets" (Sundararajan 2015, 25). The embodiment of this "high dimension conceptual space", is the *Yin-Yang* dialectics understood as "the logic of both and in contrast to that of either/or" (Li 2014a, in Sundararajan 2015, 25). At the same time, holistic thinking allows for forming numerous, adjustable sets of terms and ideas, which often by the standards of classical logic exclude each other. It then leads to the understanding of harmony as on the one hand, further enhancement of the state of balance and symmetry between different elements, and as the avoidance of disintegration (Leung 1997). The state of harmony is then a state of order (*zhi* 秩) when the state of disintegration a state of chaos and bewilderment (*luan* 亂). The order is not static though and can be hardly preserved intact. Especially since the state of order, by definition, tries to inhabit many, often contradictory tendencies. For Louise Sundararajan, harmony is then "...a delicate dance of symmetry breakdown and symmetry maintenance." (2015, 32). The pursue towards preserving stability and order and avoiding disorder are then embedded in the Chinese mentality. However, at the same time, this stability and order are guaranteed by the embracement of different often contradictory forces. On its behalf, it means the inevitability of internal tension and eventual breakdown of the order. From the micro perspective, it might be perceived as a disastrous event, but from a macro standpoint, another scheme can be applied. As Sundararajan succinctly summarises:

21 As I have tried to demonstrate there is not much of gap between these two in the context of the current discourse. Chenshan Tian (2005), on his behalf argued convincingly that even Chinese communist thought had been deeply infiltrated with the Daoist (*Yin-Yang*) perception of dialectics.

1. Inclusion: A and its other, Not-A, are intentionally paired up to make a set. This helps to build a model of harmony as unity in diversity.
2. Selection: Symmetry breakdown by prioritizing one of the binary oppositions in the set, say, A.
3. Promotion: Symmetry restoration by neutralizing the difference made in (2), by promoting the un-prioritized element, Not-A.k
4. Transition: If circumstances change, the shifting balance of A and Not-A can change accordingly. Neutralizing change helps to maintain symmetry.” (Sundararajan 2015, 33).

The whole process is then attaining stability by embracing instability, at the micro/personal/social but also in macro/cultural/political level. In other words, it is arriving at a higher level of psycho-moral symmetry. The recent over thirty years of growing re-appraisal of tradition is an explicit embodiment of such ‘internal logic’ of Chinese culture.

Conclusion

The negation of tradition by the May 4th Movement, and later Red Guards’ efforts towards uprooting everything that was ‘old’, seemed to be a radical denial of cultural roots and a call for a new ideology and socio-political system. However, after the period of turbulent ideological reshaping and political struggle, the subsequent leaders, keeping ideological facade intact, reverted the course, acknowledging the values battled by their predecessors. From the standpoint of western rationality, such a move seems like a not much more than a lacking consistency reaction to ‘the spiritual and ideological vacuum’. From the macro perspective of Chinese dialectics, so vividly presented by Tian (2005) and Sundararajan (2015), we could, using E.T. Hall’s words metaphorically say that “...behind the apparent mystery, confusion, and disorganization [...] there is order.” (1990, x). The order, in this case, is what Fang metaphorically calls the “eternal dance of *Yin* and *Yang*” (2014). From this point of view, the affirmation of the West by the new intellectuals of the early 20th century, the zeal of the Red Guards mentioned above, were an inevitable reaction to the imbalance on the one hand caused by the alienation of old values, on another influx of new ones. As the turbulent and violent response was inevitable, the curbing and accommodation of that radicalism leading to a ‘higher level of symmetry’, was another ‘logically inevitable’ consequence. To achieve it, the re-appraisal and promotion of values that could restore the psycho-moral balance and that have been (implicitly) well embedded even in the Chinese communist thought (Tian, 2005), was a natural move. This dialectics of *Yin* and *Yang*, the tension between the order and disorder is then not only an integral part of Chinese mentality but also a characteristic of Chinese history, as presented by Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng (1992). Without a doubt, the values of the past have been ‘appropriated’ and used for political purposes. However, selection and application of particular ones not only marks a re-appraisal of the tradition but also is a sign of (underestimated) vitality of Chinese socio-moral heritage and its prevalent tendency towards incorporating differences and appreciation of stability.

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