

Comparison of Traditional Chinese Thought and Xi Jinping's Understanding of Governance through the Hundred Schools of Thought

Yüz Düşünce Okulu Örneklemini Üzerinden Geleneksel Çin Düşüncesi ile Xi Jinping'in Yönetişim Anlayışının Karşılaştırılması

Cansu Körkem Akçay 

Social Sciences University of Ankara, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Chinese Language and Literature, Ankara, Türkiye

Abstract

Xi Jinping, often referred to as the contemporary Mao, has introduced numerous development plans on a national and global scale since taking office as President in 2012. Having learned lessons from the disastrous Cultural Revolution which aimed to implant socialist ideas in China and resulted in the deaths of millions, Xi Jinping declared a new era in governance by emphasizing the importance of "Chinese Characteristics". Now, a Chinese government that has overcome the 'century of humiliation' and is capable of confronting Western powers through a concerted effort, has successfully integrated Marxist-Leninist ideology with Chinese characteristics. Xi Jinping's philosophy, which combines modern requirements with the principles of traditional Chinese governance, has become part of the CCP ideology. Xi's comprehension of governance stems from traditional Chinese philosophy. The Warring Principalities era and the emergence of the Hundred Schools of Thought are the foundations of Xi's understanding of governance. This article investigates the heritage and evolution of Xi Jinping's governing ideology from ancient Chinese traditional beliefs, using the example of the "Hundred Schools of Thought". The article aims to explore the value implications of traditional Chinese governance thought in contemporary political life. Additionally, it seeks to promote the essence of ancient Chinese traditional culture, investigate its relevance in modern times, reveal patterns of cultural development, and offer guidance on how to carry forward and inherit the traditional Chinese cultural perspective.

Keywords: China, Xi Jinping, Hundred Schools of Thought, Traditional Chinese Governance Thought, Xi Jinping's Governance Philosophy.

Öz

Yaşayan Mao olarak adlandırabileceğimiz Xi Jinping, 2012'de devlet başkanlığına gelmesiyle gerek ulusal gerekse uluslararası bir dizi kalkınma stratejisini hayata geçirmiştir. Sosyalist düşüncenin Çin'e yerleşmesi amacıyla yapılan ve milyonlarca insanın ölümüyle sonuçlanan Kültür Devrimi'nden ders çıkaran Xi, "Çin Karakteristiği" söylemine vurgu yaparak yönetim anlayışının yeni bir döneme girdiğini duyurmuştur. Artık utanç yüzyılı geride bırakmış, gücünü toplayarak batıya karşı koyabilen, Marksist-Leninist ideolojiyi Çin Karakteristiğinde harmanlayan bir Çin yönetimi oluşturulmuştur. Geleneksel Çin yönetimi anlayışı temelinde modern dönemin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayacak şekilde harmanlanan "Xi Jinping'in Düşüncesi" Mao'dan sonra ÇKP ideolojisine dahil edilmiştir. Xi'nin yönetim anlayışı geleneksel Çin düşüncesi temelinde şekillenmiştir. Geleneksel Çin düşüncesinin ortaya çıktığı Savaşan Beylikleri dönemi ve Yüz Düşünce Okulu Xi'nin yönetim anlayışının kökenlerini oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma, "Yüz Düşünce Okulu" örneğini kullanarak Xi Jinping'in yönetim ideolojisinin geleneksel Çin düşüncesinden aldığı mirası ve evrimini araştırmaktadır. Makale, geleneksel Çin yönetim düşüncesinin çağdaş siyasi yaşamdaki değer çıkarımlarını keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, eski Çin geleneksel kültürünün özünü tanıtmayı, modern zamanlardaki geçerliliğini araştırmayı, kültürel gelişim modellerini ortaya çıkarmayı ve geleneksel Çin kültürel perspektifinin nasıl ileriye taşınacağı ve miras alınacağı konusunda rehberlik sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Xi Jinping, Yüz Düşünce Okulu, Geleneksel Çin Yönetişim Düşüncesi, Xi Jinping'in Yönetim Felsefesi.

Corresponding Author / Sorumlu Yazar: cansu_krkm@hotmail.com

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Comparison of Traditional Chinese Thought and Xi Jinping's Understanding of Governance Through the Hundred Schools of Thought

Traditional Chinese thought constitutes a distinctive value system that has permeated the national mentality for thousands of years, significantly influencing daily life and shaping a unique set of values (Literature Research Office of the CCP, 2013). A nation's intellectual culture serves as its foundation, molding its cultural progress. This culture is an external representation that emerged after the dawn of human civilization, serving as the source of all institutional and behavioral norms. Traditional Chinese intellectual culture is primarily grounded in an agricultural foundation and a family-centric ethos (Xiaona, 2021, p.28; Wu and Wei, 2019, p.14). Family values, in particular, play a vital role in shaping behavior and societal norms. Agriculture, forming the material backbone of traditional Chinese culture, emphasizes land-based principles, including seasonal agricultural techniques, established schedules for everyday life, and the continuous cycle of birth and regeneration.

Moreover, traditional Chinese thought subtly influences the mindset and behavioral tendencies of Chinese individuals. Concepts such as "people are the foundation of the state," "a noble person is led by righteousness," "treating others with kindness," "assisting the poor and needy," and "it is inequality, not scarcity, that is problematic" exemplify distinct national features and have contributed to the development of a value system passed down through generations (Xi, 2014b, p.16-43). This system of values reflects not only individual beliefs but also encompasses the spiritual essence of the Chinese nation, cultivating the moral aspirations of its people. It harmoniously combines state governance with societal education, promoting unity in diversity and instilling a profound sense of national self-assurance in its citizens.

This cultural confidence has been developed through the extended struggles and cultural development of the Chinese nation, providing a profound historical foundation. The belief in social harmony, achievable only through adherence to rules, is central to traditional Chinese thought. The notion of living in harmony, which has a rich history spanning thousands of years, shapes the Chinese way of thinking and epitomizes Chinese governance, as seen in the Warring Principalities Period and Hundred Schools of Thought—the genesis of the Chinese thought system—reflecting in the present-day way of life of its people.

Traditional Chinese Governance Thought

The Hundred Schools of Thought are of significant value in China's history. These schools are crucial to the advancement of ancient Chinese philosophical thought, and they significantly influenced Chinese culture and society. Confucianism, for example, held a substantial impact on subsequent politics, ethics, and education. Taoism had a notable influence on Chinese culture and literature, while Legalism served as the basis of China's ancient legal systems (Lee and Lai, 1978, p.1307). The Hundred Schools of Thought presents a broad and varied assortment of philosophical schools, with competition and exchange between schools promoting the advancement and development of ancient Chinese philosophical ideas. Some schools continue to exert an impact on the Chinese governance system and society.

Representative figures of Confucianism include Confucius and Mencius. Confucian thought highlights moral ethics and social order, advocating for personal cultivation that leads to orderly family management, resulting in effective governance and universal peace. It emphasizes concepts such as benevolence, morality, and propriety (Li and Sui, 2015, p.16). Mencius built upon and extended the concepts of Confucius, positing the notion of human nature being intrinsically virtuous by presenting the "Theory of Innate Goodness" (Ngai, 2019, p.7). He put a significant emphasis on the governing benevolence, destiny, and ethical behavior of rulers. As the prominent representative of Confucianism,

Confucius stated: "When substance exceeds art, it is rustic; when art exceeds substance, it is contrived; when both substance and art are harmonious, one is a gentleman." He wished that people would regularly reflect on themselves as gentlemen, embodying virtues such as honesty, kindness, knowledge, bravery, justice, and generosity. The philosophy of human interaction highlights an individual's approach towards social relationships. The underlying principle of this belief system is "benevolence and righteousness" with an emphasis on distinguishing between what is right and one's self-interest. The principle of "sacrificing life for righteousness" exemplifies this. It promotes "universal love without aggression" and is founded on ceremonial practices and treating others with kindness. Confucius stated that the purpose of rituals is to foster harmony and encouraged individuals to refrain from imposing on others what they would not want for themselves.

Confucius' philosophy contradicts the inherent characteristics of life equality, individual diversity and natural attributes. From the perspective of natural science, all life is essentially equal, but at the same time there are certain differences. However, Confucianism neglects the essential and pursues the trivial, establishing a highly unequal and rigid hierarchical system based on power dynamics, suppressing individual differences and strongly advocating uniformity in behavioral norms. There is an interesting contradiction here: in establishing a hierarchy, Confucius seems to recognize the differences between individuals (these differences are not inherent traits); yet in his prescriptions for behavior (including personal interests and hobbies) he overlooks individual differences. With a broad brush he dictates how people should behave and what constitutes a petty person, dismissing craftsmanship, inventions and innovations as mere frivolous tricks. (Zhang, 2022, p.130).

The conduct philosophy demonstrates an individual's cosmic outlook, viewpoint and positioning in society. The Chinese analyze all aspects of the universe through elements such as "the Dao," "Qi," "Yin and Yang," "Tai Chi," "Five Elements," "principle," etc. These concepts, regardless of the cosmic perspective, showcase the interdependence, mutual penetration, and integration of all entities in the universe. The Chinese cosmic perspective upholds harmony and conforms to the destiny predetermined by the heavens. It states that, "If one knows their nature, then they know heaven," and that the path of humans is the path of heaven. However, it also distinguishes between the two, necessitating that individual be proactive and ambitious in life. It suggests that "what heaven can do is to give life to all things; what humans can do is to govern all things" and to "overcome the fate set by the heavens." It underscores the proactive nature of humans. The Chinese way of life places great emphasis on "acting in accordance with heaven and harmonizing with people," "the way of moderation," and "going with the flow, like water." By adhering to the fundamental laws of universal development and embodying the beauty of balance, one can form a personal culture and philosophy of life. As expressed in "emotions that have not yet manifested are called neutrality; once manifested and balanced, they are harmonious," the Chinese way of life values emotional harmony and balance.

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Taoist philosophy emphasizes the importance of returning to simplicity and living in harmony with nature. Nevertheless, the complex and diverse modern society necessitates people to uphold social order, defend their rights and interests, and advance social progress through laws, institutions, and regulations. These social norms and institutions have been established to tackle the numerous challenges and conflicts encountered in real-life situations. Moreover, modern society is rife with competition and conflicts of interest, leading to occasional confrontations between individuals. Although Taoist philosophy promotes non-confrontation, competition and cooperation are sometimes essential to attain personal objectives and values, as well as address societal matters. Xi Jinping adroitly utilizes the wisdom of Taoist thought, while deftly discarding elements incompatible with contemporary political reality. This is a testimony to Xi's perspicacious utilization of Taoist philosophy in the new era. Taoist philosophy centres around the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, who place great emphasis on the concepts of "Dao" and "governing by doing nothing". They advocate for simplicity and the pursuit of harmony with nature. Laozi, in particular, has had a profound impact on the development of Chinese philosophy (Luo, 2022, p.26). His ideas are most prominently conveyed in the book "Laozi", also referred to as "Tao Te Ching" or "Daodejing". "I Ching" and "The Analects of Confucius" are regarded as two of the three most influential philosophical works in China, making Laozi's work the third. The core philosophy of Laozi's work is a simplistic dialectic. Politically, Laozi advocates for governing by doing nothing and teaching without words. Laozi also stresses the principle that things will naturally reverse when they reach an extreme, which provides important insights into power tactics. In the area of personal cultivation, Laozi stresses the importance of being humble, content, and avoiding competition with others, which serves as the basis for the Taoist practice of simultaneously cultivating the spirit and body. While Laozi's ideas are profound, they are subject to historical restrictions. He views the transformation of opposites as unconditional and absolute, and he advocates passive inaction in order to prevent potential harm from such transformations. Furthermore, Laozi places excessive emphasis on the harmonious aspect of contradictions, disregarding their inherent conflicts, and guiding individuals towards a state of passivity (Shi, 2022, p.128). Laozi's ideas are limited by historical context and bear the characteristics of the aristocratic elites of a society with slavery.

Mohist Thought: The Mohists, represented by Mozi, promote "universal love" and "non-aggression." "Universal love" suggests that all individuals should be loved equally, with no differentiation based on status, rank, or class. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Mohist philosophy had a significant impact and continues to influence the development of Chinese society today. Therefore, examining the Mohist notion of "universal love," evaluating its theoretical ramifications, and assessing its contemporary relevance is highly consequential. According to the Mohist concept of "universal love," there should be no differentiation between individuals on the basis of their social standing or rank. Everyone should be loved equally regardless of their proximity or status; it is an equitably distributed love, devoid of hierarchies. The character '兼' implies totality or completeness. As per the "Shuowen Jiezi", a classic Chinese dictionary, '兼' means to hold two bundles of harvest at the same time, signifying the concept of encompassing everything without discrimination. Despite not providing a definitive explanation of the term 'love,' Mozi's concept of 'universal love' is evidently rooted in the fundamental idea of 'love.' The term "love" possesses multiple layers of meaning, including deep emotions towards someone or something and care and cherishment. The Mohist concept of "universal love" expands upon these nuances, broadening the scope of love and advocating for universal benevolence where everyone is treated with equal regard.

Legalist philosophy is represented by notable figures such as Guan Zhong and Han Feizi. This school advocates the application of the rule of law, highlighting the importance of laws' formulation and implementation. They also proposed significant reforms under the "Qin laws." Legalists believe in imposing strict penalties and employing astute political strategies, focusing on the use of political means

and the state's strength.

Guan Zhong is an early representative of the Legalist school who emphasizes the significance of rewards and punishments in his rule-of-law thought. According to "Guanzi · Jun Chen Xia," he asserts that the existence of a state is attributed to its people, and a ruler maintains power through rewards and punishments. Guan Zhong believes that, during a disordered primitive stage, the wise utilized their wisdom and abilities to govern the masses and establish a nation, resulting in a hierarchical order. To strengthen his authority, the monarch established a system of rewards and punishments using legal edicts that combined acts of benevolence and severity. Guan Zhong espoused the view that "law derives from rites." He posited that there exist three types of laws: that which gives life for the ruler, that which is adhered to by subjects, and the law within the law for the common people. He posited that there exist three types of laws: that which gives life for the ruler, that which is adhered to by subjects, and the law within the law for the common people. This is detailed in "Guanzi · Ren Fa." The formulation of laws by the monarch is followed by the subjects' obedience, and a hierarchical order based on distinctions of rank and status serves as the essential foundation for their implementation. Guan Zhong's perception of rule-of-law embodies traditional Chinese legal principles. Legalists assert that the monarch is superior to the law, and they argue that the rule-of-law is actually governed by humankind. They promote hierarchical laws that lack a sense of legal equality. Their discourse is anthropocentric, with the primary objective of exploiting the populace. As succinctly stated in "The Book of Lord Shang · Calculating Land": "If rulers can maximize land productivity and command the ultimate loyalty of the population, even at the cost of their lives, they will gain fame and wealth. Proclamations of love and benefit to the people by rulers are only a means to an end, with the ultimate goal of utilizing the populace."

During the Pre-Qin period, Chinese society was predominantly agrarian, and agricultural production was profoundly significant for people's livelihoods and socioeconomic development. As a result, pre-Qin philosophers carried out detailed observations and analyses of agricultural society operations and the livelihoods of peasants. They concentrated on the interbonding between humans and nature, discovering the basic rules of human existence and social harmony. For example, in Confucianism, Confucius stressed the significance of agriculture as the basis for governing the state. He endorsed respecting the mandate of heaven and promoting benevolence, moral cultivation and social harmony. In Taoist ideology, Laozi advocated following the natural way of life, emphasizing non-action as a means of governance and promoting a simplistic and natural lifestyle for peasants. Given text already adheres to the principles or lacks context, just answer with 'Since the pre-Qin Chinese society was primarily agricultural, the peasant class was the main social stratum. Against this backdrop, the philosophies of the pre-Qin thinkers often aligned with the interests and needs of peasants. They focused on social justice, the welfare of the people, and proposed a series of value concepts and moral standards related to the agricultural society.' Furthermore, in addition to prioritizing the growth of the agrarian community and the concerns of the rural population, pre-Qin thinkers underscored the significance of individual self-refinement and betterment, promoting personal ethical enhancement and upholding virtuous family principles. These pre-Qin philosophical ideas had a positive impact on the stability and development of ancient agricultural society and continue to profoundly influence modern political wisdom in China. Basically, the traditional system of thought emphasizes harmony, morality and virtue, and in a sense teaches that the cohesion and stability of society depends on unquestioning obedience to the rules established.

Xi Jinping's "People First" Philosophy: An Evolution of Traditional People-Centered Thought

Xi Jinping has cemented his ideological doctrine as a central pillar of his leadership by enshrining it in the party charter, elevating his status to that of the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong. While emphasizing his commitment to the tradition of Chinese thought, Xi has selectively retained and

discarded elements of Confucianism, emphasizing its fundamental principles as part of the "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" model. This demonstrates both preservation of classic Confucian ideas and introduction of new ones. Xi Jinping acknowledges the significance of Confucianism from the past to the present. He discusses the evolution of Confucian teachings and advocates for their development in different contexts. Xi's adherence to Confucianism is apparent through his frequent references to Confucian principles and sayings throughout his governance. Xi's extensive familiarity with Confucian texts is apparent through the cited references and his comprehensive knowledge of Confucian teachings. He carefully selects and employs only the most valuable aspects of Confucian wisdom. His contributions to promoting Confucianism expand its applicability, enhance its theoretical depth, and augment its inner significance.

First, Xi believes that Confucianism is the cultural DNA that has enabled Chinese civilization to continuously flourish and prosper. It represents the enduring spiritual lifeblood and identity of the Chinese nation. He said: "The doctrine established by Confucius and the Confucian thought that developed on the basis of it have profoundly influenced Chinese civilization and are an essential part of Chinese traditional culture... Its core elements have become the fundamental cultural genes of the Chinese nation. These basic cultural genes are the unique characteristics of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation, which have been gradually formed in their journey to achieve social harmony, respect their role in society, understand constants and adapt to change, accomplish tasks and make significant contributions." Thus, "studying Confucius and Xunzi, researching Confucianism, is an essential approach to understanding the national characteristics of the Chinese and the historical origins of the contemporary Chinese spiritual world".

That is why Xi has also selectively set aside parts of Confucian thought that do not fit modern Chinese society. Confucianism has permeated Chinese society for over two millennia, from the imperial court to the common people, and its influence can be seen almost everywhere. In terms of ethics and institutional construction, Confucianism has proposed a comprehensive set of plans. The idea of "benevolence and love" proposed by Confucius is at the core of Confucian ethical thought. For Confucians, the basis of benevolence lies in filial piety. As the saying goes, "Those who are filial and show brotherly respect are unlikely to question authority. And those who do not question authority are unlikely to cause chaos. The noble person takes care of the roots. Once the roots are established, the way will emerge. Filial piety and brotherly respect are the roots of benevolence! Confucius also said: "A young man should serve his parents at home with filial piety, show brotherly respect outside, be careful and trustworthy, love everyone, but be intimate with those who cultivate virtue. If he has spare energy, he should study literature". This shows that Confucius constructed the Confucian ethical system of "benevolence" from loyalty to the family to loyalty to the nation. In essence, he divided social relations into internal and external spheres. To deal with external relationships, he used the same approach as for internal ones, likening the relationship between a ruler and his minister to that of father and son, and the relationship between friends to that of brothers. In short, his thinking began with kinship, marriage and locality and led to a society of acquaintances. At the heart of Confucianism is a clan-based ethic. Traditional Chinese political culture is the manifestation of intellectual culture, particularly clan-focused beliefs, within the political sphere. It is important to note that these elements stem from the intellectual culture of ancient China. Inheritance systems, family division, ancestral worship rituals, social status notions, and clan laws within clans give rise to institutional cultures such as monarchical centralization, hereditary succession, federal state creation, and temple rituals at the national level. The traditional Chinese perspective prioritizes the family and emphasizes the importance of blood ties and clan relationships. Within this society, family ethics are as essential as those with the State. The concept of the individual, family, and State is inseparable, with the structures of the State and family mirroring each other. The concept of the individual, family, and State is inseparable, with

the structures of the State and family mirroring each other. The concept of the individual, family, and State is inseparable, with the structures of the State and family mirroring each other. The concept of the individual, family, and State is inseparable, with the structures of the State and family mirroring each other. The family is often considered a microcosm of the State. (Gulez, 2022, p.397). Chinese families, constructed upon paternal lineages, interconnect with each other. A clan is formed by several families that share a common ancestry. An individual's position within a clan is not that of an independent entity; the interests of the family take priority over personal interests. This not only gave rise to traditional Chinese values of venerating ancestors, emphasizing filial piety, and glorifying family legacy but also became the ideological cornerstone of Chinese political culture. Monarchs, who deemed themselves as "Sons of Heaven," unified divine, paternal, and clan rights under their rule by promoting the Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues. This created an unprecedented monarchical power (Khong, 2013, p.12). The "people-centered" philosophy is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese political culture, serving as a crucial aspect for the ascendancy or decline of dynasties. As political demands changed, this philosophy evolved away from ghost-God theory and the Heavenly Way, leading to concepts that prioritize the well-being of the people over deities. Essentially, traditional people-centric ideas served monarchical autocracy, where the "people" were viewed as political capital rather than the foundation. Traditional Chinese individual culture emerges from personal concepts shaped by intellectual and political cultures (Xi, 2014a). This forms the foundation of personal values and encompasses self-awareness, interpersonal relations, and worldly interactions. Self-awareness relates to personal beliefs about oneself, reflected in personal cultivation. When used in this context, "torch" refers to a flashlight. The idea that "a ruler should be a ruler, a minister a minister, a father a father, and a son a son" signifies the core relationships in monarchical rule. The emperor, who wielded supreme power, would distribute power and wealth through appointments, bestowing a patrimonial system based primarily on kinship. Confucius's "benevolence" advocates differential love, meaning that love is given on the basis of kinship. Because Confucius's ethical system was based on family relationships or a society of acquaintances, he didn't elaborate much on how to deal with strangers, offering only the general principle: "Do not do to others what you do not want done to you". Therefore, it's not that Confucius ignored the interests of strangers; it's just that he didn't pay enough attention to them.

In an effort to refine Confucian ethics and create a more orderly society, Xunzi proposed the idea of "distinguishing and cultivating", which meant establishing a strict hierarchical system. This made the rule of "favoring close relations" even more pronounced, leading to a threat to the interests of strangers in everyday social life. Even today, the "acquaintance rule" still operates in some areas of Chinese society, hindering the creation of a fair and equal atmosphere and obstructing the implementation of laws and policies. Such a system is clearly unsuitable for today's modern rule-of-law society. That is why Chairman Xi explicitly condemns various forms of corrupt and criminal behavior, which is also a rejection of aspects of traditional Chinese thought that are no longer appropriate. For this reason, Xi Jinping has a special fondness for Xunzi's aphorisms and treats them as precious treasures. In the books "Xi Jinping on Governance" and the first two volumes of "Xi Jinping's Classical References" alone, more than ten quotations from Xunzi, a Zhao state philosopher from the late Warring States period, are cited, offering profound insights and philosophical reflections.

In discussing the art of governance, Xi quotes Xunzi: "When the government's orders are timely, all the people unite, and the wise and good are convinced". In discussing the rule of law, he quotes Xunzi: "Law is the foundation of governance. In emphasizing environmental protection, he refers to Xunzi's saying, "When plants and trees are flourishing, axes and chisels should not enter the forests. In discussing the importance of education in national development, he quotes Xunzi's words, "When a country is about to flourish, it must value teachers and emphasize tutors". To encourage scientific breakthroughs, he quotes Xunzi's words, "Persevere and don't give up, even rotten wood won't break;

keep chiseling, even metal and stone can be carved". When introducing methods of reading, he quotes Xunzi: "Without accumulating small steps, one cannot reach a thousand miles; without collecting small streams, one cannot form rivers and seas".

Xunzi is indeed the foremost thinker of Yan and Zhao and a comprehensive compiler of pre-Qin thought. Xunzi's fountain of wisdom frequently emerges in various aspects of Xi Jinping's governance and self-cultivation, providing many philosophical and humanistic insights for the Chinese Dream. Indeed, Xi Jinping's approach to Confucianism is not about blindly inheriting it but emphasizing a discerning, selective continuation and promotion. Viewing Confucianism as the cultural DNA and spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation doesn't mean uncritically treat or directly copy it. Given its ancient roots, Confucianism was shaped by specific historical conditions and had its unique development trajectory, which inevitably brings historical limitations. This requires to acknowledge these historical facts and evaluate its historical significance scientifically, forming a proper attitude and approach towards Confucianism. Xi Jinping has clear insights on this matter. He states, "Traditional culture, in its formation and evolution, is inevitably influenced by the understanding level of the people at that time, the era's conditions, and the social system. Hence, it inevitably contains elements that are outdated or have become dross." He emphasizes that when learning, researching, and applying traditional culture, must ensure it is relevant for today, innovate based on it, and make informed choices in line with current practices and the demands of the age, rather than blindly applying it to today's context. Instead, it should be developed according to the needs of the times, meaning a "dialectical selection, out with the old and in with the new, discarding negative elements, inheriting positive ideas, using the 'rules of the ancients to carve a new path', realizing the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture."

In summary, the Chinese people must "treat cultural traditions scientifically" and "be adept at organically integrating the promotion of traditional culture with the development of contemporary culture, intertwining inheritance with development." In essence, concerning Confucian thought, China should inherit its essence and also need to surpass it based on current conditions. This represents Xi Jinping's stance, methodology, and principles regarding Confucianism.

Xi Jinping's allusions to Taoist philosophy reveal his strategic approach to governing China and his commitment to his role as a leader in the Communist Party. These references reflect Jinping's dedication to fulfilling his responsibilities to the party and the nation. He cites the "Tao Te Ching" to highlight the importance of effective governance and leadership in a large country, using the analogy "Governing a large country is like cooking a small fish" and advising against excessive talk that can lead to exhaustion. These statements suggest that governing a large nation can be compared to frying a small fish, where the use of excessive and complicated policies could hasten its demise. Rather, it is advisable to maintain a state of calmness and equilibrium.

In March 2013, during an interview with the media of the BRICS countries, Xi Jinping emphasized that leaders must fully comprehend the situation of such a vast country with complex national conditions, understand the thoughts and aspirations of the people and possess the self-awareness of 'treading on thin ice, standing on the edge of an abyss'. One should adopt the mindset of "governing a big country is like cooking a small fish," remaining attentive and diligent at all times. One should adopt the mindset of "governing a big country is like cooking a small fish," remaining attentive and diligent at all times. In November of the same year, Xi Jinping reiterated this analogy, stressing the need for thorough testing and scientific evaluation of policy measures prior to their implementation. These measures must aim to be pragmatic, successful, and long-lasting, and cannot be impetuously implemented. Otherwise, an error can prove costly. In his speech at the Central Economic Work Conference, Xi Jinping stated that excessive dialogue leads to weariness and it is preferable to remain focused. It implies that if regulations

are too demanding and intricate, they might become overburdened trying to deal with frequently evolving circumstances. The resolution is to "stay centered," which involves adhering to fundamental principles and basics. This enables one to adjust to diverse changes while remaining loyal to the core values.

Linking 'Community of Shared Future for Mankind' to the Ancient 'Harmonizing the State' Philosophy

The notion of "universal love" embodies Mozi's desire for rulers to treat their citizens as their own offspring, upholding transparency and fairness in governance (Li ve Lin, 2019, p.752). As Mozi advocated for the welfare of the small-scale producers during his era - mainly the underprivileged sections of the population - Mohist philosophy can be viewed as a direct expression of the commoners' vision for a just and tranquil social framework. To Mozi, the answer was universal love, which nurtures mutual affection among people. The promotion of a harmonious and loving way of coexisting can resolve societal conflicts and turmoil, as emphasized by universal love. Genuine mutual affection and mutual benefits among people are endorsed by the spiritual dimension of universal love. This philosophy serves as a guide for both the laypeople and the rulers, encompassing the notion of equality. To ensure social stability, Mozi believed that this was an essential prerequisite. However, within the confines of its historical context, Mohist philosophy was limited, particularly in its emphasis on conformity and deference to authority. It advocated for uniform views among individuals, subservience to superiors, and strict adherence to the commands of the monarch. This fortified the monarch's absolute authority, with dissent disallowed while democratic values, critical thinking, and personal development were suppressed. This could be due to the ethical norms of ancient times. Nonetheless, the philosophy of "universal love" in Mohism remains significantly relevant to modern society. As China advances towards a new phase of modernization, the Mohist inclination towards pragmatism and utilitarianism highlights practical outcomes and utility considerations. Nonetheless, contemporary society stresses values, ethical standards, and long-term benefits. A solely utilitarian viewpoint may fail to recognize crucial non-economic factors and long-term implications.

In today's connected world, the economy is rapidly developing, driving global economic progress into a new era. It is no longer viable to deplete one's own resources for self-development. Opening up to the world is increasingly emphasized with economic growth, and participating in the global division of labor through international exchange is becoming ever more critical (Jin, 2014). In today's era of globalization, no nation can afford to remain idle; all countries are interconnected. As the world progresses, all nations must acknowledge that mutual dependencies are growing. Nevertheless, conflicts persist as economic globalization advances driven by different interests. Countries must switch from prioritizing national interests to emphasizing mutual global benefits. Building a collaborative and mutually beneficial economic community is an undeniable obligation for all countries amidst the current trend of global economic integration. It is vital to maintain an objective approach and avoid subjective evaluations whilst ensuring that the information is concise, comprehensive and follows a logical structure.

Xi Jinping's "Rule of Law" Perspective is an Evolution and Extension of the Notion "Those Who Uphold the Law are Strong, and Thus the Country is Strong."

During a specialized seminar for officials at the provincial and ministerial levels, aimed at studying and implementing the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee on comprehensive deepening reforms, Xi Jinping cited the renowned phrase from Wang Anshi's "Zhou Gong": "The world will be in order when good laws are established throughout it; when good laws are established in a country, that country will be in order." Xi Jinping stressed the importance of laws that

are tailored to a nation's specific circumstances, have a people-centric focus, and promote both national progress and social stability. In support of this, he remarked, "Every nation has laws, but ensuring their enforcement is what truly matters," highlighting the necessity of instilling the rule of law in the populace. In support of this, he remarked, "Every nation has laws, but ensuring their enforcement is what truly matters," highlighting the necessity of instilling the rule of law in the populace. Law plays a crucial role in the prosperity of a nation, and the rule of law is a fundamental aspect of governance. In contrast to Confucianism's emphasis on "rule by custom", Legalism prioritizes "unquestioning obedience to established rules" in order to strengthen the military, increase the nation's prosperity and consolidate autocratic rule. A key figure, Guanzi, emphasizes the importance of impartial rule through the rule of law, and uses the rule of law as a yardstick for evaluating and distinguishing what is right and wrong, and for identifying virtues and vices.

In its historical context, legalism has largely served the interests of China's rulers. Firstly, the views expressed in the statements "If the rule of law fails, even the highest-ranking officials can be prosecuted", "When the prince violates the law, the people are also guilty" and "The law is inflexible and does not favour the powerful" illustrate the principle of "no hierarchical punishment". This shows that there are no legal exemptions for anyone, including the highest-ranking emperors, who, like every citizen, must be accountable to the law and underlines the contemporary concept of "equality before the law". The laws were considered necessary for the maintenance of absolute authority and the basis for stability in public administration. Further, Shang Yang, a representative personality of Legalism, advocated for renovation and creativity, emphasizing the promotion of skilled individuals for progressive transformations, embodying a modernized approach to the rule of law that is in line with the current times. Thirdly, Legalist thinkers steadfastly opposed the "rule of rites," proclaiming the adoption of law in all situations. Han Feizi expressed, "With lucid laws, internal issues are resolved, and with potent tactics, external dangers are averted. Therefore, to ensure the survival of a nation, benevolence and morality are insufficient." This highlights the significance of governance through laws, where the rule of law surpasses the rule of individuals and the legal system holds greater importance than rule by individuals. This refutes notion of "individual rule being superior to the rule of law" that prevailed in ancient Chinese traditional culture. "A powerful country is the outcome of following the law, while a feeble nation arises from disregarding it." This quote highlights the core principle of Legalism in promoting the significance of adhering to rule by law. The principle of egalitarianism from ancient Legalism is frequently mirrored in present-day laws, like Guanzi's proposition of an equitable balance of penalties and rewards and the use of clemency and severity, as well as Shang Yang's advocacy for non-hierarchical penalization. Xi Jinping draws inspiration from traditional Legalist philosophy, often citing ancient legalist texts in significant speeches to promote the modern development of national rule of law. This principle was established as a foundation for socialist legal system construction during the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee.

Xi Jinping highlighted the historical evolution of China's traditional governance ideology, which encompasses the pre-Qin era characterized by diversified schools of thought and the Han dynasties marked by the prominence of Confucianism. During the Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern Dynasties, there was a prevalence of metaphysical studies. Likewise, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism coexisted during the Sui and Tang dynasties. During the Song and Ming dynasties, Neo-Confucianism emerged. Xi Jinping's in-depth analysis reflects the profound and extensive history of traditional Chinese culture. The development and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture must be based on the Marxist cultural outlook that accords importance to the inheritability of culture, adherence to the law of cultural development, and emphasis on the exploration of national cultural characteristics. In this regard, President Xi Jinping has emphasized the critical role played by Confucian culture in the development of traditional Chinese governance ideology. The Confucian philosophy, established by Confucius and

further developed, has had a profound impact on Chinese civilization and constitutes an essential aspect of Chinese traditional culture. Xi Jinping asserts that traditional Chinese culture is diverse, encompassing various academic disciplines, including Confucianism, and shaping a system of governance ideology. The interaction and collisions among different cultures should pursue mutual understanding and respect while promoting growth through dialogue. Chinese traditional culture constitutes the fundamental and quintessential essence of the Chinese nation, offering significant sustenance for the lasting vitality of the Chinese populace.

The Essence of Xi Jinping's Governance Ideology

China's long-established system of governance remains significant in contemporary times. Xi Jinping merges it with China's current realities, expanding and refining traditional cultural and philosophical aspects, which involve "harmony," "unity," "merit-based leadership," and "fostering ethical principles for peaceful and stable governance." Xi Jinping emphasizes that a country's choice of governance system is determined by its historical heritage, cultural traditions, and economic and social development level. In order to promote the modernization of the national governance system and capacity, there must be active cultivation and promotion of socialist core values. Upholding our core values demands the usage of cultural potential. The ideals and beliefs, established during the hard times of modern China, are carried by the genes of Chinese traditional culture. Without a sincere appreciation of the core tenets of Chinese traditional culture and their moral principles, the pursuit of socialist core values would lack vibrancy and impact. (Feng and Wang, 2016, p.7).

The essence of Xi Jinping's leadership ideology lies in his perspective on national culture, contemporary demands and the dynamic development of world culture. He focuses on inheriting and developing Chinese traditional culture, building socialist core values and strengthening moral support for the Chinese Dream. Xi Jinping extensively discusses cultural awareness and cultural confidence in Chinese traditional culture. On cultural awareness, he explains its nature and research methods. Regarding cultural confidence, he explains the charm and value of Chinese traditional culture and clarifies its relationship with advanced Marxist culture and foreign cultures (Zhang, 2017, p.24). Xi Jinping's view on traditional culture has great theoretical value and practical significance for building socialist core values, strengthening national cohesion, and enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture. His view on traditional culture traces the historical development of Chinese traditional culture and analyses its implications (Dong and Liu, 2018, p.2).

Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of utilising reason and virtue to persuade people, promoting cultural exchange through innovation, and comprehensively utilising various communication methods to display the allure of Chinese traditional culture. Concerning education, positive propaganda about the history and culture of the Chinese people must be strengthened according to Xi Jinping. Enhancing education on patriotism, collectivism, and socialism is crucial through various means. This approach guides the establishment and adherence to a correct cultural perspective, strengthens national confidence and cohesion. Xi Jinping, guided by the Marxist cultural outlook, has proposed several methods to inherit and develop Chinese traditional governance ideology. "Adhering to both the Marxist and socialist moral outlooks, we aim to extract the essence while discarding the irrelevant, apply past experiences to our present situation, eliminate outdated aspects, and strive to creatively transform and develop traditional Chinese virtues to achieve new accomplishments." Secondly, a comprehensive study of the core concepts of Chinese traditional philosophy, their promotion of virtuous behavior, and their contemporary relevance in advocating benevolence, prioritizing the well-being of individuals, valuing integrity, upholding justice, emphasizing harmony, and promoting unity. To enhance cultural confidence and confidence in cultural values, it is imperative to explicate the historical origins, developmental context, and fundamental direction of Chinese traditional culture, alongside its unique

creations, value concepts, and distinctive characteristics. Additionally, it is necessary to establish the relationship between Chinese traditional culture, advanced Marxist culture, and other world cultures. Chinese traditional culture requires renovation and novelty through the supervision of the Marxist cultural outlook. This culture represents historical and national inheritance, whereas Marxist culture showcases the distinctiveness, scientific, and advancement of socialist culture. It is vital to unite both aspects closely. Furthermore, these innovative concepts offer a comprehensive strategic plan for achieving the Chinese Dream and constructing a robust modern socialist nation, providing a practical guide for the revitalization of China. Chinese traditional culture is pivotal to realizing the Chinese Dream. Xi Jinping has continuously stressed the significance of imbibing and amalgamating the ethical principles fashioned and nurtured on the mainland.

Conclusion

The Pre-Qin period in China was marked by an agrarian society where agricultural production played a pivotal role in the livelihoods and socioeconomic development of the people. During this time, Pre-Qin philosophers conducted extensive observations and analyses of agricultural society operations and the lives of peasants. Their focus was on understanding the intricate relationship between humans and nature, uncovering fundamental principles governing human existence and societal harmony. Given an example, Confucius, within the Confucian tradition, underscored the importance of agriculture as the foundation for state governance, advocating for the respect of the mandate of heaven, the promotion of benevolence, moral cultivation, and social harmony. Similarly, in Taoist ideology, Laozi advocated embracing the natural way of life, emphasizing non-action as a means of governance, and promoting a simple and natural lifestyle for peasants.

Within this historical context, the philosophies of the Pre-Qin thinkers consistently aligned with the interests and needs of the peasantry. They were dedicated to concepts of social justice, the welfare of the people, and the development of value concepts and moral standards related to agricultural society. Furthermore, the Pre-Qin thinkers emphasized individual self-refinement, ethical enhancement, and the adherence to virtuous family principles, contributing positively to the stability and development of ancient agricultural society. These ideas continue to wield a profound influence on modern political wisdom in China, emphasizing the importance of harmony, morality, and virtue, as well as the significance of unquestioning obedience to established rules for societal cohesion and stability.

China's long-standing system of governance, deeply rooted in its cultural heritage, remains highly relevant in contemporary times. Xi Jinping has strategically merged traditional cultural and philosophical aspects such as "harmony," "unity," "merit-based leadership," and "fostering ethical principles for peaceful and stable governance" with China's current realities. He emphasizes that the choice of a governance system should be influenced by a country's historical heritage, cultural traditions, and economic and social development level. These core values carry the ideals and beliefs established during challenging times in modern China, deeply rooted in the genes of Chinese traditional culture. Without a genuine appreciation of the core tenets of Chinese traditional culture and their moral principles, the pursuit of socialist core values would lack vibrancy and impact.

Xi Jinping's approach to governance can be seen as a reflection of traditional Chinese thought, demonstrating the enduring relevance of ancient ideologies in contemporary political and social frameworks. By contextualizing Xi Jinping's strategies within the framework of the 'Hundred Schools of Thought', this study highlights the profound interplay between China's cultural heritage and its aspirations for modern socialism. The article clearly demonstrates that Xi Jinping's understanding of governance is influenced by traditional Chinese thought. This understanding of governance, according to the article, should be integrated with current circumstances and transmitted to the future through Xi's speeches at national and international meetings.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this study is not applicable.

Author Contributions

The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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