

The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: towards a Chinese integral state

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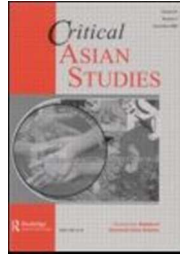
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The Core Socialist Values: Towards a Chinese Integral State

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Abstract:	<p>The Core Socialist Values have become a defining characteristic of the Xi Jinping era. Under the umbrella of the Chinese Dream discourse, the Core Socialist Values represent a distillation and crystallization of the Xi administration's vision for Chinese state-society-citizen relations. While using many terms found in western liberal political discourse, such as freedom, democracy, equality and rule of law, the CCP use of these terms is markedly different.</p> <p>This article seeks to deconstruct the Core Socialist Values and to understand how each of the twelve values is defined, independently and in relation to other components. The article also explores, using a Gramscian analytical framework focused on the "integral state", how consensus to the state's proscribed values is not undermined by competing discourses. Through an emergent Chinese "integral state" consideration is given to how civil society becomes the ground for building consensus, reinforced by coercive strategies emanating from the Chinese state. In conclusion, the paper argues that the Core Socialist Values represent a shift in focus under the Xi administration to emphasize the superstructure over the economic base, with the objective of creating citizens of and for the People's Republic of China.</p>

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The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: Towards a Chinese Integral State

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ABSTRACT

The Core Socialist Values have become a defining characteristic of the Xi Jinping era. Under the umbrella of the Chinese Dream discourse, the Core Socialist Values represent a distillation and crystallization of the Xi administration's vision for Chinese state-society-citizen relations. While using many terms found in western liberal political discourse, such as freedom, democracy, equality and rule of law, the CCP's use of these terms is markedly different.

This article seeks to deconstruct the Core Socialist Values and to understand how each of the twelve values is defined, independently and in relation to other components. The article also explores, using a Gramscian analytical concepts, how a Chinese "integral state" is being prepared to ensure that consensus to the state's proscribed values is not undermined by competing discourses. Through an emergent Chinese "integral state" consideration is given to how civil society becomes the ground for building consensus, reinforced by coercive strategies emanating from the Chinese state. In conclusion, the paper argues that the Core Socialist Values represent a shift in focus under the Xi administration to emphasize the superstructure over the economic base, with the objective of creating citizens of and for the People's Republic of China.

Keywords: propaganda, hegemony, citizenship, socialism, China

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The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: Towards a Chinese Integral State

国民者，以国为人民公产之称也。
国者积民而成，舍民之外，则无有国。
梁启超，1899

‘Citizens’ is the term for the people who collectively own the nation.
A nation is the accumulation of its people’s achievements, without whom there would be no nation.
Liang Qichao, 1899¹

The Xi Jinping era began with cautious optimism for many China observers, yet has given way to concerns that Xi’s policies constitute a volte-face on social and political progress which, in the most ardent criticisms, constitute a regression to the Mao era². Alongside clearly repressive actions against activists and a sweeping anti-corruption campaign, new policy initiatives seek to re-emphasize the leading role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) across both the repressive and ideological state apparatus. This includes directives instructing the state media to serve the CCP³; tighter regulation of the funding and registration of domestic and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)⁴; the reiteration of CCP supremacy over the legal system⁵; the strengthening of political education in the compulsory and higher education sectors⁶, and intimidation, persecution and prosecution of various activists, lawyers and campaigners under charges of sedition and subversion. That these developments constitute evidence of the reassertion of illiberal politics cannot be disputed: these are the strategies of an authoritarian state. However, authoritarianism is not always solely characterized by coercion, and alongside such strategies there is clear evidence that the CCP is, through its propaganda infrastructure, pushing a range of consensus building activities under the umbrella of the *Chinese Dream*⁷ discourse. Most prominent amongst these is the *Core Socialist Values* campaign, which lays out

¹ Liang 1899, 309.

² For one of the most in-depth analyses and criticisms, including comparisons between Xi’s policies and the *mass campaigns* of the Mao era, see Lam 2015.

³ The *48 character policy* announced by the *People’s Daily* on 20th February 2016 provides 12 four character phrases instructing the media in three broad categories: loyalty to the CCP, unity of the people and clarity of communication. See Bandurski 2016

⁴ For background on this issue see Catá Backer 2015.

⁵ Minzner 2015.

⁶ See Ministry of Education 2011 “Opinions of the Ministry of Education CCP Group Opinions on the Implementation of Deepening Development of the Education System’s Patriotic Education. Available online at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A13/s7061/201601/t20160129_229131.html (Accessed 20 April 2016).

⁷ *Italicized* terms contained in the main text and footnotes have been translated from the original Chinese. A full glossary of these terms, arranged alphabetically, is contained in Appendix 1 with English, pinyin and simplified Chinese.

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3 the CCP's vision through four goals at each of the national, societal and citizenship
4 level.
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6 The core approach of this article is to examine and interrogate the *Core*
7 *Socialist Values* in order to understand how the CCP is expanding its appeal to
8 resonate with the people over whom it wishes to exert its dominance. It is, first and
9 foremost, a study of consensus building initiatives originating with the CCP and
10 targeted at Chinese citizens, though it must be acknowledged that these activities
11 constitute one side of a state-building project, complemented with a range of policies
12 and responses which are aimed at negating and suppressing opposition to the state
13 vision. Several concepts developed by Antonio Gramsci are introduced to illuminate
14 these consensus building efforts, and to frame an exploration of the relationship
15 between such efforts and the coercive and repressive activities also clearly evident.
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23 The article adopts a critical approach which has, at its heart, an objective of
24 understanding the trajectory of development in contemporary China. It begins by
25 laying out the Gramscian concepts of hegemony, the integral state and common
26 sense utilized in the analysis, along with discussion of these concepts in relation to
27 contemporary China. It then proceeds to provide an account of the *Core Socialist*
28 *Values*, drawing on CCP leader speeches, CCP theoretical publications and an
29 analysis of several hundred propaganda posters published under the *Chinese Dream*
30 propaganda campaigns⁸, further dissecting the national, societal and citizenship
31 dimensions of the *Core Socialist Values*. Throughout this analysis, in addition to
32 primary source materials, extensive reference is made to secondary literature. These
33 secondary sources are drawn from across the fields of China Studies, Politics,
34 Sociology, Law Studies and Chinese Philosophy. While a Gramscian lens is applied
35 throughout, the concepts of hegemony, the integral state and common sense are
36 reintroduced explicitly in the conclusion to offer a critical account of the *Core*
37 *Socialist Values*, not merely as a rhetorical propaganda campaign, but as the
38 centerpiece of a hegemonic state-building project focused on state-led reform and
39 guidance of transformation of the superstructure.
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53 **Gramsci: Hegemony and the Integral State**

54 Following the defeat of the Italian Communist movement by Mussolini, and his
55 subsequent imprisonment, Gramsci sought to explain a paradoxical aspect of the
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59 ⁸ These *Chinese Dream* posters are all available for download at:
60 http://www.wenming.cn/jwmsxf_294/zggygg/index_12218.shtml.

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3 failure of revolution in advanced capitalist states: why, given the prevalence of
4 capitalist exploitation in the advanced capitalist states of western Europe, did socialist
5 revolution fail to foment and overthrow the ruling elites? Gramsci developed an
6 ‘arsenal of concepts’⁹ which located the durability of these advanced capitalist
7 systems in a fortress of civil society which could survive intact even when the state
8 was weakened by conflict. In employing the thought of Gramsci in analysis of
9 contemporary China, the various concepts developed by Gramsci to survey the
10 strength of advanced capitalist states in the early 20th century are appropriated to
11 explore how the CCP is strengthening its leadership position through a process of
12 consensus building. Gramscian approaches to the analysis of the contemporary
13 Chinese condition can be found across a range of disciplines and research areas: Nigel
14 Todd¹⁰, Arif Dirlik¹¹ and Liu Kang¹² have drawn clear parallels between the thought
15 of Gramsci and the revolutionary strategies of Mao; Blecher uses Gramsci to frame
16 explorations of workers’ protests and labour relations during the reform of state-
17 owned enterprises under Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji’s policies in the late 1990’s¹³;
18 Zheng Yongnian utilizes a Gramscian framework to cast the CCP as “organizational
19 emperor”¹⁴; Zhang Xiaoling applies Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to analyses of
20 the Chinese state media sector¹⁵ and communications technology development¹⁶;
21 Elena Mayer-Clement uses Gramsci to navigate the impact of marketization and
22 commercialization of the film and music industries upon CCP regime stability¹⁷, and
23 Su Xiaobo develops a Gramscian analytical framework to interrogate the strategic use
24 of ideology and the narratives of revolution and reform to pursue, attain and maintain
25 hegemony in contemporary China¹⁸. More recently, Li Xing has utilized Gramsci’s
26 concepts of hegemony, counter-hegemony and passive revolution to frame his
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49 ⁹ Laclau and Mouffe referred to an “arsenal of concepts” introduced by Gramsci through his
50 “Selections from the Prison Notebooks”. See Laclau and Mouffe 2001, IX; Gramsci 1992. For an
51 accessible introduction to the concepts, thought and legacy of Antonio Gramsci, see Hoare and Sperber
52 2016.

53 ¹⁰ Todd 1974

54 ¹¹ Dirlik 1983

55 ¹² Liu 1997

56 ¹³ Blecher 2002

57 ¹⁴ Zhang 2009

58 ¹⁵ Zhang 2011

59 ¹⁶ Zhang and Zheng 2009

60 ¹⁷ Mayer-Clement 2015

¹⁸ Su 2011

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3 discussion of the *Chinese Dream*¹⁹, while Heidi Yu Huang provides an overview of
4 the reception of Gramsci's concept of hegemony in China itself²⁰.
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6 Gramscian hegemony differs from conventional uses of the term, moving
7 away from simple equations with the military and economic dominance of one class
8 over another to focus on the consensus between the ruling elite and wider society.
9 Hegemony, in the Gramscian sense, is conceived as "consensus armored by
10 coercion"²¹. Consensus, for Gramsci, extends beyond a simple equation with
11 persuasion to refer to the participatory aspect of consensus. It is how people act, not
12 necessarily how they think, which Gramsci emphasizes as the basis of consent and
13 dissent. The parameters of consensus are initially determined by the state vision, in
14 this case the *Core Socialist Values*, with negotiation over those parameters being the
15 primary function of hegemonic activity. It is in this regard that Hobsbawm identifies
16 Gramsci's greatest contribution: his development of a Marxist theory of politics²².
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24 While domination can be achieved through simple coercive means, via the
25 judiciary, legislature, military, paramilitary and other formal institutional structures,
26 Gramscian hegemony is a form of domination reliant primarily on the negotiation of
27 consent and active participation of citizens through civil society, which includes
28 organizations as diverse as schools, universities, guilds, chambers of commerce,
29 media outlets, non-governmental organizations, pressure groups, trade unions,
30 churches and other religious organizations. Gramsci's view of civil society stands in
31 stark contrast to the term's general use in common academic and journalistic contexts
32 which characterize civil society more broadly, much as Charles Taylor proposed: "a
33 web of autonomous associations independent of the state, which binds citizens
34 together in matters of common concern and by their existence of actions could have
35 an effect on public policy"²³. As Alagappa argues, such definitions reify civil society
36 as a normative ideal, containing within it "the potential to liberate citizens from the
37 oppressive state and to confer full economic and political freedom on them"²⁴.
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48 In contrast to definitions offered by Taylor and Alagappa, Gramsci's civil
49 society combines with political society to form what he calls the integral state. With
50 regards to hegemony, the integral state constitutes the arena in which hegemony is
51 maintained, via coercive methods actualized through the formal institutions of
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55 ¹⁹ Li 2015

56 ²⁰ Huang 2015

57 ²¹ Gramsci 1992, 263.

58 ²² Hobsbawm 1977

59 ²³ Taylor 1995, 204

60 ²⁴ Alagappa 2004

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3 political society, and via consensus, which is contested and negotiated through civil
4 society. This dual characteristic can also be expressed as the ruling elite's ability to
5 exercise leadership through consensus building with allied social groups, while
6 antagonistic social groups are the subject of coercive strategies aimed at pre-empting,
7 negating or punishing challenges to the ruling elite. For Gramsci, force and consent
8 are inseparable elements of hegemonic dominance. As Gramsci explains: "the
9 (integral) state is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which
10 the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the
11 active consent of those over whom it rules"²⁵. This view challenges definitions which
12 reify civil society as a domain of free association and expression where the state is
13 subject to challenge from non-state actors. Instead civil society is conceived of by
14 Gramsci as an arena of ideational contest in which the subaltern groups negotiate the
15 terms of their continued domination by the ruling elite. Hegemony exists when there
16 is large scale consensus to the values, dispositions and beliefs of the ruling elite. It is
17 for this reason that the *Core Socialist Values* are analyzed as the potential basis for a
18 Chinese integral state.
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31 **From Philosophy to 'Common Sense'**

32 Crucial to the process of negotiating consensus is Gramsci's differentiation between
33 'good sense', which Gramsci compares to coherent philosophy, and 'common sense',
34 which "enters the consciousness of the masses as part of their confounded and
35 fragmentary"²⁶ world view. Where a coherent philosophy or set of values is devised
36 and disseminated by a ruling elite, such as the *Core Socialist Values*, Gramsci argues
37 that "the document of its historical effectiveness"²⁷ lies not in the complete and
38 unconditional acquiescence or brainwashing of those over whom the ruling elite wish
39 to exert dominance, but that such efforts "leave behind a sedimentation of 'common
40 sense'"²⁸. It is this 'common sense', shared in and across groups which prepares the
41 terrain and enhances the possibility of hegemony: "Common sense is the folklore of
42 philosophy, and is always half-way between folklore properly speaking and the
43 philosophy, science and economics of the specialists. Common sense creates the
44 folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a
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57 ²⁵ Gramsci 1992, 244

58 ²⁶ Rupert 1995, 30

59 ²⁷ Gramsci 1992

60 ²⁸ Gramsci 1992, 326

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3 given place and time.”²⁹. Put simply, ‘common sense’ is a canon of knowledge that
4 frames our understanding of society; that is shared intersubjectively across disparate
5 communities, social groups and the general population, and which exists at such a
6 depth that the mere possibility of questioning it does not occur.
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10 Common sense, understood in this way, constitutes the genetic building blocks
11 of cultural power. While many may view CCP propaganda as nothing more than
12 rhetoric, the sincerity, or lack thereof, of the communications between the Chinese
13 state and its citizens does not necessarily diminish their transformative potential.
14 Rather, rhetoric is a key strategic weapon in the reproduction and transformation of
15 common sense over time and crucial to the mobilization of common sense in service
16 of the interests of the state. The extent to which a ruling elite is successful in having
17 their values absorbed into common sense, the greater likelihood that common sense
18 will come to reflect those values and contribute to consensus building between the
19 state and its citizens. As Fontana observes, the distinction between knowledge and
20 opinion breaks down in hegemonic contexts, with hegemony encapsulating a “dual
21 and reciprocal movement – the passage from knowledge to opinion and from opinion
22 to knowledge”³⁰.
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31 While Gramsci conceived of the concepts of hegemony, the integral state and
32 common sense to reveal the durability of advanced capitalism, and simultaneously to
33 explain the failure of socialist revolution, these concepts offer a framework for the
34 analysis of the *Core Socialist Values* as one aspect of state-building under the Xi
35 administration. Through approaching the *Core Socialist Values* from a Gramscian
36 perspective, they take on a potentially transformative power which demands further
37 enquiry. With Gramsci’s concepts in mind, we will now turn to an interrogation of the
38 *Core Socialist Values*.
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47 **Core Socialist Values**

48 Since the ascension of Xi Jinping to the CCP leadership at the 18th Party Congress in
49 November 2012, a major publicity campaign has been undertaken to disseminate
50 *Core Socialist Values*³¹. *Core Socialist Value* propaganda is most visible through the
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54 ²⁹ Gramsci 1992, 326

55 ³⁰ Fontana provides an in-depth discussion of this in his article “The Democratic Philosopher: Rhetoric
56 as Hegemony in Gramsci”. Parallels are drawn between Gramsci’s common sense and Plato’s *doxa*,
57 which refers to opinion given by rhetorical speech. This contrasts with Gramsci’s good sense, which is
58 compared to the Platonic concept of *episteme* as knowledge given by dialectical speech. See Fontana,
59 2005, 119.

60 ³¹ Mahoney 2014

blanket coverage of poster art and digitized forms of propaganda posters. These are developed and disseminated through the CCP publicity infrastructure³² under the *CCP Propaganda Department (CCPPD)* and the *Central Guiding Committee for Building Spiritual Civilization (CGCBSC)* at the various administrative levels: national, provincial, municipal, district and community³³. In addition, the publicity offices of state media and publishing houses also appear in more prominent, large-scale and widespread, propaganda displays³⁴. At all administrative levels, these posters are labeled as *public information advertisements* under a national campaign called “*Stressing Civilization, Building a New Culture*”. All publicity materials are also collated and publicized online through wenming.cn, a website jointly administered by the *CCPPD* and the *CGCBSC*.

Figure 1 Digital Screen displaying the Core Socialist Values

(INSERT FIG.1 HERE)

These posters are seen at bus stops across the country. This poster is specifically for Suzhou, showing the Core Socialist Values with an image depicting landmarks in Suzhou industrial Park, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. The bus stop is located in Dushu Lake Science and Education Innovation District, part of Suzhou Industrial Park. Photo: Michael Gow

This campaign, a component of the Xi administration’s hallmark political discourse of the *Chinese Dream*³⁵, has been rolled out across all state media platforms, including television, newspapers, radio, billboards, posters and, increasingly, via social media platforms including *Sina Weibo* and *Tencent WeChat*. Television commercials appear on China’s national broadcaster, *CCTV*, and on provincial television channels. Even a popular children’s cartoon, *Big Head Son and Little Head Dad*, broadcast on *CCTV*, has been utilized as a method of dissemination³⁶. The high visibility campaign is virtually inescapable. The aesthetics and artwork of propaganda posters draw on traditional arts and crafts produced by Chinese artists, including sculpture from

³² Shambaugh provides a detailed analysis of the propaganda infrastructure under the first Hu Jintao administration (2002-2007) which still holds largely true, save for personnel changes. See Shambaugh 2007.

³³ For example, *Municipal Publicity Department* and the *Municipal Spiritual Guidance Committee*

³⁴ For example, the *Xiamen Daily Press*; *China Network TV*, or *People’s Daily* or *Xinhua Media*.

³⁵ The term “China Dream” is used extensively in academic literature and commentary on China. However, “*Chinese Dream*” is the official translation and is used exclusively in official translations of CCP and PRC government English language materials.

³⁶ Twelve “Big Head Son, Little Head Dad” Core Socialist Values episodes can be viewed online at: <http://tv.cntv.cn/video/VSET100213790433/824f99ee024fc5abfa1e4c37bfa6c2> (accessed 18 April 2016)

Tianjin, Shandong and Guangdong; intricate paper arts from Jiangsu, Shanxi and Hebei, and various styles of traditional painting from Shanghai, Heilongjiang, Henan and Shaanxi.

Figure 2 Chinese Dream Propaganda Poster

(INSERT FIG 2. HERE)

Chinese Dream, My Dream. The figurine featured is named *Chinese Dream Baby* and features in animated digital media and traditional poster communications. The figurine is Tianjin clay pottery by artists Zhang Caisu and Lin Gangzao. The photo was taken on Century Avenue, Pudong, Shanghai. Photo: Michael Gow

The imagery and tone of the political messages is both striking, in artistic terms, and subtle, in the communication of apparently apolitical traditional Chinese values. The campaign lays out a vision for the dialectical relationship between nation, society and the citizen and constitutes a crystallization of the CCP's values which stand in contrast to western liberal values. Furthermore, it eschews the indoctrination of Marxist dogma, which is largely absent in terms of slogans and aesthetics, in favour of aligning notions of citizenship with Confucian ethical concepts including *filial piety*, *self-cultivation* and the *morally superior person*.

Core Socialist Values: Reforming the Superstructure

The primary emphasis throughout the post-reform era has been to promote strategies to transform the economic base, but the Xi administration's reforms and policy campaigns place a greater weighting on transformation of the superstructure. This indicates a concern amongst the current CCP leadership regarding the ethical, moral and ideological transformation of Chinese society. Alongside economic performance, national rejuvenation and competent governance, this emphasis on values relates to social stability as one of the constitutive elements of the CCP's "performance legitimacy"³⁷ which it promotes as the irrefutable evidence of its suitability for continued governance. This emphasis on ethics and morality is revealed in political speeches including several given by Xi Jinping:

“We need to energetically foster and promote core socialist values; promptly establish a value system that fully reflects Chinese

³⁷ Zhu. 2011.

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3 characteristics, our national identity, and the features of the times;
4 and strive to occupy the leading position on this issue. Ethical values
5 play a very important role among core values. Without morals, a
6 country cannot thrive, and its people cannot stand upright. Whether
7 or not a nation or an individual has a strong sense of identity largely
8 depends on their morals. If our people cannot uphold the moral
9 values that have been formed and developed on our own soil, and
10 instead indiscriminately and blindly parrot Western moral values,
11 then it will be necessary to genuinely question whether we will lose
12 our independent ethos as a country and a people. Without this
13 independent ethos, our political, intellectual, cultural and
14 institutional independence will have the rug pulled out from under
15 it.”

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24 Xi Jinping³⁸

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26 *Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee,*
27 *February 17, 2014*
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31 In an article published by *Qiushi*, the theoretical journal of the CCP, Liu Qibao³⁹
32 asserted that “where a nation and country are concerned, the longest lasting and most
33 profound force are the core values commonly recognized by the whole society”⁴⁰.
34 Prior to the 18th Party Congress, outgoing CCP leaders, including General Party
35 Secretary Hu Jintao⁴¹ and NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo⁴², rejected the notion of
36 adopting a “western” political system. However, in a second speech, Xi Jinping
37 acknowledges the strength of values in western liberal democracies and identifies the
38 pervasive effect those values have in framing legal, regulatory and policy initiatives.
39 In doing so, Xi indicates an admiration for the stability conveyed upon western
40 nations by their shared values, pervasive through civil society and guaranteed
41 through their institutionalized status. This continues from and complements Xi’s
42 preceding speech, cited earlier, that China’s values must develop to reflect Chinese
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55 ³⁸ Xi 2014a, 120-121.

56 ³⁹ Liu Qibao is Head of the *CCP Publicity Department*. See Liu 2014.

57 ⁴⁰ Liu 2014. Creemiers 2015 has provided a translation of this article at:

58 <https://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2014/10/15/propaganda-chief-liu-qibao-elaborates-chinas-indigenous-development-path/> (Accessed 18 April 2016).

59 ⁴¹ Hu 2012

60 ⁴² Wu 2011

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3 tradition and prevailing *national conditions* with both speeches constituting a
4 rationale for Chinese exceptionalism:
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8 Core socialist values should not only be cultivated and fostered by
9 improving people's ways of thinking and encouraging good habits,
10 but should also be guaranteed by institutions and mechanisms.
11 Western countries are very good at this. Even though their
12 governing parties alternate in power every four or five years, their
13 values are stable and consistent. One important reason for this is
14 that the design of their systems, the formulation of their policies,
15 laws and regulations, and their judicial and administrative actions
16 are all governed by their core values.
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18 Xi Jinping⁴³

19 *Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee,*
20 *February 24, 2014*
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30 The first mention of *Core Socialist Values* came from Hu Jintao on the 8th
31 November 2012, in his last duty as General Party Secretary before handing over the
32 reins to Xi Jinping. In his final report delivered at the 18th Party Congress, Hu
33 proclaimed that the CCP should “promote prosperity, democracy, civility and
34 harmony; uphold freedom, equality, justice and rule of law, and advocate patriotism,
35 dedication, integrity and friendship, so as to cultivate and observe *Core Socialist*
36 *Values*”⁴⁴. These values have since been clearly categorized under three levels:
37 *Prosperity, democracy, civility and harmony* correspond to the *national* level;
38 *freedom, equality, justice and rule of law* constitute *societal* values, and *patriotism,*
39 *dedication, integrity and geniality* are the values associated with *citizens*.
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48 Figure 3 The Core Socialist Value Tree
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59 ⁴³ Xi 2014a, 122-123.

60 ⁴⁴ Hu 2012

This poster shows the *Core Socialist Values* tree, a common poster seen across China. It is displayed here by an elevator at the Vanguard Shopping Mall on Jinliang Road in Suzhou Industrial Park. The poster displays the national (orange), societal (blue) and citizen (green) values. Photo: Michael Gow

Liu Yunshan⁴⁵ states that the *Core Socialist Values* “represent a more concentrated expression, clearly spelling out the values that the state, society, and citizens should aspire to, incline towards, and act by”⁴⁶. These values are substantively impacted by their categorization at the *national*, *societal* or *citizen* level. They must be understood as constitutive elements of hegemonic⁴⁷ projects at the *national*, *societal* and *citizen* levels, not as independent values and goals in and of themselves.

National Core Socialist Values: Prosperity, Democracy, Civility and Harmony

Both *prosperity* and *harmony* form a link with the Hu Jintao era, extending the dual objectives associated with Hu Jintao’s *Scientific Outlook on Development* of establishing a *harmonious society* and a *moderately prosperous society*⁴⁸. They are joined by two other concepts, *democracy* and *civility*, forming four national characteristics which the CCP wishes to characterize the modern Chinese nation by 2049.

Figure 4 Harmonious Motherland, Peaceful Families

(INSERT FIG 4. HERE)

This poster from the “*Pictures Tell Our Values*” series displayed on a giant LED screen at the Suzhou International Expo Centre. The poster slogan reads “Harmonious Motherland, Peaceful Families” above the smaller text listing the *Core Socialist Values*. Photo: Michael Gow

⁴⁵ Liu Yunshan is the 5th ranking member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee who oversees the entire propaganda infrastructure of both the CCP and PRC government. Between 1993-2002 he served as Deputy Head of the CCP Propaganda Department (CCPPD) and was Head of the CCPPD for the entirety of the Hu Jintao administration from 2002-2012. Since 2012 Liu has become Chairman of the Central Guidance Committee on Building Spiritual Civilization (CGCBSC); Leader of the CCP Central Leading Group on Propaganda and Ideological Work (CLGPIW), and President of the CCP Central Party School. He has maintained positions of central importance to the ideological work of the CCP under Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, a period spanning well over 20 years. See Shambaugh 2007; Dotson 2012.

⁴⁶ Liu Yunshan 2014

⁴⁷ Hegemony is used here in its Gramscian sense, whereby the ruling elite aims to build consensus to its values, dispositions and vision through a process of consensus building via civil society. Hegemonic projects are the deliberate strategies devised within political society and mobilized through civil society to engage the populous in serving the ruling elite’s interests. Gramsci 1992; Hoare and Sperber 2016

⁴⁸ Solé-Farràs 2008.

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3 Perry considers it “noteworthy” that *democracy* is ranked after *prosperity* in
4 importance⁴⁹, yet an alternative interpretation is that these four national values are
5 interdependent: greater than the sum of their constituent parts. Perry also notes that
6 the interpretation of democracy “seeks to elide the fundamental contradiction between
7 Enlightenment values and illiberal politics”⁵⁰, revealing a conceptualization which
8 “refers to something quite different from what American social scientists generally
9 have in mind when we debate the prospects for China’s democratization”⁵¹. It is a
10 contention which finds confirmation in the statement by Hu Jintao that China “will
11 never copy a Western political system”⁵².

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Harmony informs the internal CCP practices guided by the Leninist concept of
democratic centralism, allowing for democratic debate, discussion and development
of policy within the CCP, but also requiring a united front precluding the possibility
of dissenting opinion once policy directions have been decided upon⁵³. It is an
approach which replaces the competitive aspects of western liberal democracy to
emphasize *harmony* in the political process which is itself, in turn, illustrative of
civility.

Experiments with *deliberative democracy* in China have spawned a focus of
scholarly enquiry over the past decade⁵⁴. Tang argues that deliberative democracy is
possible in China, even though the political system is resistant to liberal democratic
electoral reform⁵⁵, identifying processes whereby discussion of the best method to
refine and enact policy is acceptable, but where direct challenges, injurious to the
concept of *harmony* and considered to be uncivilized political contests, are not. These
discussions further highlight the dislocation of democratic contests, concerned with
the selection of political representatives, from the process of democratic participation
which is the defining characteristic of *democracy* in the *Core Socialist Values*.

Harmony not only informs understandings of democratic participation, it also
relates to the value of *civility* at the national level. In a speech given at the UNESCO
Headquarters on 17th March 2014, Xi Jinping spoke at length about the need to

⁴⁹ Perry 2015

⁵⁰ Perry 2015, 903

⁵¹ Perry 2015, 905

⁵² Hu 2012

⁵³ Lenin defined democratic centralism whereby criticism of suggested Party action is permissible, but only before a course of action has been decided upon. See Lenin 1906

⁵⁴ For detailed discussion on the introduction and adaptation of deliberative democracy in the Chinese context, see Lieb and He 2006,

⁵⁵ Tang 2014

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3 respect different civilizations⁵⁶. There are several implications of this speech: that
4 Chinese civilization is different from others; that parochial or ethnocentric judgments
5 about other cultures are unacceptable, and that civilizations can be viewed as different,
6 but not as superior or inferior. Kallio draws attention to Xi Jinping's claim that
7 Chinese civilization should be characterized by a capable administration, thriving
8 culture, economic development, stability and a unified people⁵⁷. *Civility* is often
9 linked to the *rejuvenation of the nation*, a concept which is itself inextricable from the
10 teleological goals of national *prosperity* and the *moderately prosperous society*.
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18 **Societal Core Socialist Values: Freedom, Equality, Justice and Rule of Law**

19 The four *societal* values provide perhaps the most contentious definitions when
20 compared with their common sense⁵⁸ meanings in western liberal political discourse.
21 In an article entitled "How to understand 'freedom' of the *Core Socialist Values*"⁵⁹,
22 Xu Nengyi⁶⁰ acknowledges the origins of the concept of *freedom*, beginning with
23 early Enlightenment thinkers in 17th century Europe before providing a contrasting
24 definition of *freedom*. That *freedom* is categorized here as a *societal* value is a
25 distinction within the *Core Socialist Values* discourse which serves to emphasize the
26 elevation of society above that of the individual. Xu identifies the collective nature of
27 *the people's freedom* as distinct from *western freedom* choosing to emphasize the
28 "great cause of the people's (collective) freedom to push forwards". *Freedom*, then,
29 necessitates the placement of limitations upon personal freedom when it infringes on
30 the rights of society to progress, with the trajectory of that progression delimited by
31 the CCP. *Harmony* and participatory democracy are reinforced at the societal level
32 through the concept of a *people's freedom*, with mass activity within the confines of
33 the CCP vision constituting the contribution of Chinese people in the realization of
34 the *Chinese Dream*.
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48 Figure 5 Societal Core Socialist Values:

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51 (INSERT FIG 5. HERE)
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54 ⁵⁶ Xi 2014b, 283-289

55 ⁵⁷ Kallio 2015

56 ⁵⁸ Gramsci's 'common sense' is thought that is common to a group or common to society as a whole,
57 and concerns how a ruling class may develop strategies to intervene and shape common sense to serve
58 their own objectives. For further explanation see Jones, S. 2006, 53-55.

59 Xu 2015

60 ⁶⁰ Xu Nengyi is Deputy Editor of *Dangjian*, the journal of the CCP Publicity Department.

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5 This poster campaign follows the exploits of characters Beibei and Jing Jing as they demonstrate the essence of
6 *Core Socialist Values* across settings familiar to younger school children. This example shows the societal values
7 of *freedom, equality, justice* and *rule of law*. This poster series is commonly seen in kindergartens, schools, parks,
8 community and youth centres. Photo taken at Landsea International Residential Compound Badminton Court,
9 Jinliang Road, Suzhou. Photo: Michael Gow

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11 Widening income disparity within cities; between urban and rural populations, and
12 between coastal and inland provinces, represents a major challenge in light of the
13 stated *Two Centenary Goals*⁶¹. Feng notes that equality will be measured by two key
14 indicators relating to the first centenary goal to be achieved by 2021: the equalization
15 of access to public services and the narrowing of income disparity and the wealth
16 gap⁶². *Equality* is framed in terms of society: rather than being an objective to ensure
17 the equality between individuals, it approaches *equality* as an objective that should be
18 pursued through policy initiative. Kongshøj discusses initiatives aimed at increasing
19 coverage of the welfare state, highlighting the impact of decentralized governance in
20 the PRC. Nevertheless, Kongshøj⁶³ argues that local experiments have come in
21 response to stated national objectives of integrating the social insurance schemes of
22 urban and rural hukou holders, and that “as so often seen before in Chinese history,
23 local experiments often point to future national-level policies”⁶⁴.

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25 Interpretations of *justice* and *rule of law* reinforce the underlying logic of
26 freedom of society over freedom of the individual, and the maintenance of social
27 order. Xi Jinping has highlighted that upholding *justice* has a role to play in
28 conferring legitimacy upon the CCP, making a commitment in February 2013 to
29 “make every effort to ensure that people feel that justice is served in every court
30 case”⁶⁵. This pledge for *justice* must, however, be understood in relation to *socialist*
31 *rule of law* which is at odds with *western conceptions of rule of law*. *Socialist rule of*
32 *law* was written into the constitution of the People’s Republic of China in 1999, with
33 Article 5 of the Constitution amended to state that the “*People’s Republic of China*
34 *governs the country according to the law and establishes the nation under socialist*
35 *rule of law*”. In Chinese legal discourse, *rule of law* is contrasted with *rule of man*, yet
36 there is also a distinction between interpretations of *rule of law*. The term *rule of law*
37 is an abbreviated term in Chinese which can refer to both *socialist rule of law* and

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⁶¹ Xi 2014c, 60

⁶² Feng 2015

⁶³ Kongshøj 2015

⁶⁴ Kongshøj 2015, 581

⁶⁵ Xi 2014d, 161

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3 *western conceptions of rule of law.* This is often expressed in English language
4 scholarship on Chinese law as the distinction between “rule of law” and “rule by law”.
5 Orts⁶⁶ provides a discussion of these concepts as they relate to China’s legal
6 development, and argues that both are essential in understanding the trajectory of
7 China’s legal reform in the post reform era. Orts also offers distinctions between the
8 two differing conceptual relationships between the law and the state. According to
9 Orts, “Rule of Law”, the concept most clearly associated with legal systems in
10 western liberal systems, constitutes:

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18 *“a normative and political theory of the relationship (between) legal*
19 *institutions and the political state that includes, but is not limited to,*
20 *a theory of limited government through some form of constitutional*
21 *separation between the judiciary and other state powers”⁶⁷.*

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26 Conversely, the concept of “rule by law” that is most often associated with
27 the law in China refers to:

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31 *“the use of legal rules in order to assure the uniformity and*
32 *regularity of an existing legal system, regardless of its more general*
33 *political or moral properties. In this sense, even a grossly*
34 *authoritarian legal system may qualify as ruling by law.”⁶⁸*

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39 The *Core Socialist Values*, however, refer to a *societal* value of *rule of law*, not “rule
40 by law”, requiring a further examination of the Chinese terms. With regards to
41 *socialist rule of law*, the term *yīfǎzhìguó* reveals the objective to establish “*a nation*
42 *ruled according to the law*” which can be more associated more closely with Orts’
43 definition of “rule by law”. This differs from a similar term, *yīfǎzhìguó*, more closely
44 associated with western conceptions of rule of law, which advocates “*a nation ruled*
45 *by means of the law*”⁶⁹ and which reflects Orts’ definition of “rule of law”.
46 Consequently, the CCP’s claims to embrace and promote the “rule of law” are often
47 dismissed as rhetoric, yet such claims ignore this distinction between *yīfǎzhìguó* and
48 *yīfǎzhìguó*.

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⁶⁶ For a full discussion on “rule of law” vs “rule by law” in China, see Orts, 2001.

57 ⁶⁷ Orts, 2001, 93.

58 ⁶⁸ Orts, 2001, 93.

59 ⁶⁹ For a detailed analysis of the linguistic distinctions between these two terms see Shick-Chen, A.,
60 2007

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3 The Fourth Plenum of the 18th Party Congress became the first CCP Central
4 Committee Plenary Session on the Rule of Law, resulting in a document entitled
5 “*Some Major Questions in Comprehensively Advancing Governing the Country*
6 *According to Rule of Law*”⁷⁰. Peerenboom documents both the optimism of some
7 legal scholars ahead of the Fourth Plenum and the abject pessimism of many critics
8 whose position is committed to the notion that “Socialist Rule of Law is an
9 oxymoron”⁷¹. Peerenboom acknowledges that the Fourth Plenum resulted in a
10 definition of *Socialist Rule of Law* that is “normatively...an emphatic rejection of the
11 globally dominant liberal democratic conception of rule of law”⁷². *Socialist Rule of*
12 *Law* is a mechanism for serving the teleological modernization projects constitutive of
13 the *Chinese Dream*, a fact which categorizes *Socialist Rule of Law* as a form of “rule
14 by law”. Critics claim that *Socialist Rule of Law* places the CCP above the law, yet
15 this is a defining and intentional characteristic of *Socialist Rule of Law*. However,
16 while the CCP itself remains above the law, the ongoing anti-corruption campaign
17 increasingly provides CCP members with little protection from the full force of the
18 law⁷³, though any officials subject to legal prosecution are first expelled from the
19 CCP⁷⁴. Defining *Socialist Rule of Law* in service of the CCP’s political projects
20 repositions the emphasis of *justice*: not justice for individuals and the protection of
21 rights, but *justice* for social order which, in turn, provides *freedom* for the progression
22 of society and the benefit of all people.

33 34 35 36 37 38 **Citizen : Patriotism, Dedication, Integrity and Friendship**

39 The *Core Socialist Values* propaganda campaign conceptualizes the citizen as
40 subordinate to the nation and society, yet also defines citizenship as constitutive of
41 and crucial to the realization of the *Chinese Dream* at the national and social levels. In
42 this regard, the CCP vision for the citizen in contemporary China is that of a duty-
43 bound actors: patriotic and dedicated citizens are essential for the realization of
44 national rejuvenation and establishment of a prosperous nation; *integrity* and *geniality*
45 help bring about *civility* and *harmony*, and *democracy* is inextricably linked to the
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53 ⁷⁰ Full document available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2014/1029/c64387-25927606.html>

54 ⁷¹ Peerenboom 2015, 55

55 ⁷² Peerenboom 2015, 55

56 ⁷³ Pei Minxin discusses the culture of fear now gripping the sphere of officialdom, introducing the term
57 “*miaosha*” which he translates as “instant kill”, though it is borrowed from online gaming culture and is
58 better translated into English as a “*headshot*”. See Pei 2016.

59 ⁷⁴ The anti-corruption drive is pursued first through extra-judicial investigations under the *double*
60 *designation* system, conducted by the *CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI)*,
before being passed to the *People’s Procuratorate* for formal criminal proceedings. See Sapio 2008.

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3 willing participation of the citizenry in this process. In the view of the state, a society
4 that is free, equal, fair and administered according to the law requires a citizenry with
5 these qualities.
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8 9 10 **Citizenship as a Social Relationship with the State**

11 The CCP, in developing the *Core Socialist Values*, has reduced the citizen to the
12 status of a social actor whose agency is subsumed under their responsibility to
13 contribute to societal and national objectives. This reduction requires analysis in
14 order to understand why it is unlikely to be rejected outright, and why it may resonate
15 with the citizenry, constituting a reasonable framing of state-society-citizen relations
16 in the Chinese context.
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19 The Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong's identification of Chinese culture as a
20 "*differential mode of association*"⁷⁵ is particularly useful in elaborating an explanation
21 of how the CCP are attempting to reify citizenship in terms of its relationship to the
22 CCP's vision for a modern China. Fei's model describes a series of concentric circles
23 emanating from a social actor, imbuing it with an "ego-centric" characteristic.
24 However, ego-centrism in Fei's model is not to be confused with individualism,
25 whereby a person's identity is independent of social relationships⁷⁶. Henry Rosemont
26 Jr. attributes the centrality of individualism in western political thought to the
27 philosophical arguments of thinkers from Hobbes through to Rawls⁷⁷. However, the
28 notion of the individual likely comes from Judeo-Christian thinking, as beings created
29 in the image of God, and itself informs the development of political documents such
30 as the American Declaration of Independence which appropriates Judeo-Christian
31 notions of the individual: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that *all men are*
32 *created equal*, that they are *endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights*,
33 that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"⁷⁸. Small wonder that
34 western liberal political and civil society has evolved to espouse this normative
35 perspective so evangelically. In contrast, Fei defines the *differential mode of*
36 *association* as a "system of social networks linking people together in multiple ways
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53 ⁷⁵ This concept is contrasted with the "*organizational model of association*" which Fei argues
54 characterizes western societies. See Fei 1992, 60-70.

55 ⁷⁶ Henry Rosemont Jr discusses the absurdity of suggestions that people in western societies are not
56 social beings, but qualifies this by arguing that "our sociality is at best peripheral in modern Western
57 political and moral theory". See Rosemont Jr 2008, 47.

58 ⁷⁷ Rosemont Jr 2008.

59 ⁷⁸ Italics, author's emphasis. Full text of the American Declaration of Independence is available at:
60 http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html (Accessed 18 April 2016).

and placing different, though clear-cut, moral demands on each person in each specific context”⁷⁹.

Fig 6. Differential Model of Association

(INSERT FIG 6. HERE)

Image: Michael Gow

Fei’s model emphasizes the dynamics of Confucian hierarchies in Chinese social relations; that the self is defined in terms of its relationships with others, necessitating adherence to the culturally-bound codes of etiquette, protocol and convention. These superior-subordinate hierarchies are not systems of total dominance, but convey what Madsen describes as “complementary reciprocity” upon both parties, manifest through mutually reinforcing moral behaviour⁸⁰. Crucially, social relations are not based on voluntary association, but on moral obligation. The “ego” at the centre of Fei’s system of concentric circles is not autonomous, but exists only through the moral obligations of the relationships which constitute them as a social being: “there is, in principle, no self outside of roles and relationships”⁸¹. Confucian thought asks the question, are we “human beings”? or “human becomings”?⁸², accentuating the nuanced Confucian perspective that humanity is not an inherent property of people, but an expression between people. As Gao states: “a Chinese male, for example, would view himself as a son, a brother, a husband and a father, but hardly as himself...in essence a person can never separate him or herself from (their) obligations”⁸³. Nosco also highlights this as an identifying feature of Confucian conventions, noting that “Confucianism would reject the notion of a human person as an individual, if by this term one means to suggest the presence of a free and autonomous self”⁸⁴. The role of the *citizen* as defined by the *Core Socialist Values*, and the relationship between citizens and the state, follows the Confucian, relational logic of Fei’s model: citizens are not “born”, but rather they “become” by virtue of their contribution to the teleological modernization project formulated by the CCP. In

⁷⁹ Fei 1992, 24

⁸⁰ Madsen 2008, 8

⁸¹ Fei 1992, 26

⁸² Ames 2010, 143

⁸³ Gao 1996, 83

⁸⁴ Nosco 2008, 33-34

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3 identifying and defining a citizenship characterized by *patriotism, dedication,*
4 *integrity* and *geniality*, the CCP are aiming to exploit socially constructed, common
5 sense understandings of relationships which stem from Confucian thought. Daily
6 interactions in China are projected onto the state-citizen relationship in a manner
7 which makes it seem both mundane and natural.
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11 **Dreams and Goals: Strictly, Actually, Comprehensively**

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13 While the *Chinese Dream* is characteristically amorphous, elusive and malleable⁸⁵,
14 the *Core Socialist Values* campaign defines specific concepts. In a move which
15 secured consistency with the outgoing administration of Hu Jintao while
16 simultaneously ensuring progression from it, Xi Jinping unveiled *Two Centenary*
17 *Goals* which characterize the *Chinese Dream*. The first, of these centenary goals calls
18 for the achievement of a *moderately prosperous society* by the centenary celebrations
19 of the founding of the CCP in 2021. It echoes propaganda from the Hu Jintao era and
20 is related specifically to the first national Core Socialist Value: *prosperity*. The second
21 centenary goal, to be realized by 2049 on the centenary of the founding of the PRC, is
22 the transformation of China into a nation that is characterized by all four national
23 *Core Socialist Values: prosperity, democracy, civility and harmony*⁸⁶.
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33 These *Two Centenary Goals* are clearly reflected in Xi Jinping's *Four-*
34 *pronged Comprehensive Strategy* (hereafter *Four Comprehensives*), the emergent
35 guiding philosophy of Xi Jinping which is expected to succeed Hu Jintao's *Scientific*
36 *Outlook on Development*. The *Four Comprehensives* aim to: *comprehensively build a*
37 *moderately prosperous society; comprehensively deepen reform; comprehensively*
38 *govern the nation according to law, and to comprehensively and strictly govern the*
39 *Party*⁸⁷.
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45 This final element of the *Four Comprehensives* emphasizing Party governance
46 has also been prioritized with its own propaganda campaign. The *Three Strict, Three*
47 *Real*⁸⁸ campaign aims to improve Party discipline and cadre conduct, incorporating
48 elements of the *Core Socialist Values*. Cadres are reminded to *strictly cultivate their*
49 *moral character; strictly exercise power and authority, and be strict with oneself.*
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55 ⁸⁵ Bislev 2015, 586

56 ⁸⁶ Xi 2014c, 60

57 ⁸⁷ The CCP theoretical journal, *Qiushi* promotes Xi Jinping's *Four Comprehensives* through dedicated
58 pages of its website. Available at: <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/40557/394278/>

59 ⁸⁸ *Dangjian*, the CCPPD Journal, dedicates a section of its website to reportage on the *Three Stricts,*
60 *Three Real* campaign. Available at: <http://dangjian.people.com.cn/GB/136058/395166/index.html>

These “Three Stricts” form the foundation of ethical conduct necessary to realize three “real” objectives: *planning, innovation and integrity*.

The first element of *Three Strict, Three Real* campaign encourages cadres to *strictly cultivate moral character*, evidencing an appropriation of the Confucian status of a *morally superior person* which, according to Confucian philosophy, is pursued and attained through a process of moral *self-cultivation*⁸⁹. Similarly, the demand to *be strict with oneself* constitutes one half of a famous Chinese saying on moral conduct: “*be strict with oneself, be lenient/generous to others*”⁹⁰.

Citizenship & Confucian Ethics: Tapping into ‘Common Sense’ Understandings

Feng⁹¹ discusses the inter-weaving of Confucian ethical concepts with contemporary CCP propaganda concepts. Discussing the six virtues of Confucian ethics, Feng draws attention to the Confucian philosophical relationship between virtue and conduct. Table 1 shows traditional Confucian ethics: *six virtues* which can be demonstrated through the conduct of *six virtuous actions*:

Table 1 Six Virtues and Six Virtuous Actions

The Six Virtues – 六德					
Wisdom	Benevolence	Good Faith	Righteousness	Loyalty	Harmony
智	仁	信	义	忠	和
zhi	ren	xin	yi	zhong	he
The Six Virtuous Actions – 六行					
Filial Piety	Friendship	Kindness	Love of Kin	Endurance	Charity
孝	友	睦	姻	任	恤
xiao	you	mu	yin	ren	xu

⁸⁹ Ames 2010

⁹⁰ This saying is inspired by the Analects 15:15: “*If one sets strict standards for oneself, while making allowances for others when making demands on them, one will stay clear of ill will*”. See Lau 1979, 134

⁹¹ Feng 2015

The *six virtuous actions* do not correspond to *specific virtues*, rather, Confucian thought adopts an holistic ethos whereby all *six virtuous actions* contribute to the attainment and demonstration of the *six virtues*. This interrelationship between virtue and conduct is echoed through the citizen-level *Core Socialist Values*. A sub-campaign within the *Core Socialist Values* poster campaign, promoted under the heading *Great Virtues Illuminate China*, mirrors this connection between virtue and conduct, forming a tacit relationship between the *Core Socialist Values* and five virtuous actions.

The *Great Virtues Illuminate China* campaign contains five virtuous actions which borrow from both the six virtues and six virtuous actions associated with Confucian thought, intertwining them with aspects of the *Core Socialist Values*, rendering them indistinguishable from traditional Confucian values and conduct. Similarly, through drawing on Confucian concepts already absorbed into existing common sense understandings, and aligning new concepts with them, this strategy makes the adoption of *Core Socialist Values* less prone to rejection as it merges with the existing currents of common sense.

Table 2 Great Virtues Campaign: Five Virtuous Actions

Great Virtues Illuminate China: Five Virtuous Actions 大德耀中华 (dade yao zhonghua)				
Benevolence	Righteousness	Honesty	Respect	Filial Piety
仁	义	诚	敬	孝
ren	yi	cheng	jing	xiao

The Confucian ethical concepts of *benevolence*, *righteousness* and *filial piety* all appear in the Great Virtues campaign. Two further values, *honesty* and *respect* appear in both the *Great Virtues Illuminate China* and *Core Socialist Values* campaigns, though not in the original Confucian six virtues or six virtuous actions. Other Confucian concepts including *harmony* and *friendship* feature extensively on *Core Socialist Values* posters, and to a lesser extent in *Great Values Illuminate China* posters.

Table 3 Confucian and Core Socialist Values in Poster Campaigns

			Confucian		Chinese Dream		
			Six Virtues	Six Virtuous Actions	Great Virtues Campaign	Related to Core Socialist Values	Appears in Core Socialist Value Posters**
Wisdom	智	zhi	•				•
Benevolence	仁	ren	•		•		•
Good Faith	信	xin	•				•
Righteousness	义	yi	•				•
Loyalty	忠	zhong	•				•
Harmony	和	he	•			• National	•
Filial Piety	孝	xiao		•	•		•
Friendship	友	you		•	•	• Citizen	•
Kindness	睦	mu		•			
Love of Kin	姻	yin		•			
Endurance	任	ren		•			
Charity	恤	xu		•			•
Honesty	诚	cheng			•	• Citizen	•
Respect	敬	jing			•	• Citizen	•

** Indicates direct reference and use of the characters for each value across several hundred propaganda posters made available for download at: http://www.wenming.cn/jwmsxf_294/zggygg/index_12218.shtml . *Kindness*, *Love of Kin* and *Endurance* are all represented, but not explicitly through the use of the characters.

The five virtues of the *Great Virtues Illuminate China* campaign are further integrated into propaganda messages alongside explicitly Confucian virtues, increasing their appeal to common sense understandings of Confucian ethics. Many propaganda posters from the umbrella *Chinese Dream* campaign align the Confucian concept of the *morally superior person*⁹² with the role of the citizen referenced in the *Core Socialist Values*.

Two posters are discussed here: The first poster⁹³ identifies the *three virtues of a morally superior person* as *benevolence*, *wisdom* and *courage*. The second poster⁹⁴ introduces the Confucian ethic of *righteousness* stating that a *morally superior person embodies righteousness*. Of the four virtues contained in the two posters, only *benevolence* is explicitly connected to both the Confucian *six virtues* and CCP

⁹² In Confucian morality and ethics, the ultimate aim of the *self-cultivation* process, pursued through the *six virtuous actions*, is to become a *morally superior person*.

⁹³ The first poster can be viewed at this Baidu link: <http://ow.ly/Y4dt305t3Gr>

⁹⁴ The second poster can be viewed at this Baidu link: <http://ow.ly/POYy305t41c>

propaganda, appearing as a virtue in the *Great Virtues Illuminate China* campaign. The remaining terms of *wisdom* and *righteousness* are taken directly from the Confucian *six virtues*, while *courage* is a Confucian concept that is both dependent upon and constitutive of *benevolence* and *righteousness*⁹⁵.

Additional propaganda campaigns serve to better illustrate the *Core Socialist Values* in action, with one prominent campaign, *Good People, Everyday*, launched in September 2014, providing daily profiles of citizens from all walks of life who embody the values through their social conduct, *actively spreading and carrying forward the core socialist values*⁹⁶. Profiles include *good sons, good employers, good lawyers, good teachers, good cadres, good street cleaners, good doctors, good farmers*, and even *good guys*⁹⁷. A new example of conscientious Chinese citizenship is added to the site daily, while a sister site, the *China's Good People List*, allows netizens to vote from a list of approximately 200 citizen candidates each month through a national online and social media campaign⁹⁸. Profiles of citizens include both party members and non-party members, and emphasize their demonstration of *Core Socialist Values*. *Filial piety* and acts of magnanimous social contribution feature prominently, as well as *dedication* and altruism in serving local communities at all levels, with candidates nominated under five categories: *Helping People for Happiness; Just Heroism; Honesty and Integrity; Dedication and Devotion*, and *Filial Love of Kin*.

A Chinese Hegemony with a Confucian Common Sense

In making the Confucian turn, the CCP under the Xi administration are expanding their own interests to encompass those of the people they govern and over whom they wish to exert dominance. This constitutes an act of moral and political leadership which seeks to resonate with Chinese citizens, reframing their citizenship as achievable through conduct which reflects aspects of existing intersubjective normative values characteristic of contemporary Chinese society. While the vast majority of Chinese people will not have a deep philosophical or academic understanding of Confucianism, they do, nevertheless, share a broadly accepted,

⁹⁵ Cua 2008

⁹⁶ *Good People Everyday* is available online at: http://www.wenming.cn/sbhr_pd/hr365/

⁹⁷ *Good guy* refers to young men in their 20s and is a very informal term like “dude” or “bloke” in English. *China's Good People List* is available at:

http://archive.wenming.cn/jingtai/sbhr_news/sbhr_zrwl.htm (Accessed 20 April 2016)

⁹⁸ *China's Good People List* and the monthly voting activity is available online at:

http://archive.wenming.cn/jingtai/sbhr_news/sbhr_zrwl.htm (Accessed 20 April 2016).

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3 common sense understanding of Confucian values. The *Core Socialist Values*
4 currently being propagated by the CCP aim to find traction with those established
5 beliefs, values, dispositions and conventions, and seek to encourage conduct which is
6 already viewed as culturally and socially desirable.
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10 However, Gramsci conceives of hegemony as a process by which social forces
11 and movements can be articulated into a set of strategic alliances which ultimately
12 serve the interests of the ruling elite. The *Core Socialist Values* and the *Chinese*
13 *Dream* move beyond the simple reflection of shared beliefs to constitute a state
14 project to usher in a new cultural order which cements the leadership position of the
15 CCP in contemporary China. The CCP under Xi Jinping regards consent to the values
16 which it claims characterize the modern Chinese nation, rather than simple
17 acquiescence in exchange for economic opportunity, as essential in securing long term
18 social stability. Xi makes this explicit in a speech given on an inspection tour
19 following the 18th Party Congress in December 2012:
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28 If our 1.3 billion citizens and 82 million Party members as well as
29 overseas Chinese can achieve consensus, we will constitute a
30 powerful force...We must realize that people from different
31 localities and social strata who have different backgrounds and
32 occupations think differently. We must therefore consider: where can
33 we find consensus? Where can we allow differences to persist?
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38 Xi Jinping⁹⁹
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41 Therefore the CCP is compelled to align its interests with the broader interests of the
42 Chinese people and differentiated groups; to appeal to them, and to engage in an
43 active process of fostering consensus which, taken in tandem with coercive measures,
44 pursues a distinctly Chinese hegemony. Through such a process, the CCP aims to
45 inculcate *Core Socialist Values* through encouraging conduct and behaviour which is
46 already broadly interpreted as normatively correct. To the extent that, over time, this
47 is successful, the absorption of these values into Chinese common sense will be
48 realized, forming a relatively durable consensus aimed at conveying a robust stability
49 upon the both the CCP and the PRC. However, this is a process that will likely unfold
50 over the next several decades, well beyond the term limit of Xi Jinping. As Xi himself
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⁹⁹ Xi 2014e, 49

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3 notes: “Preparatory work must be done. One must not worry about it taking too long,
4 for the work will be accomplished in the fullness of time”¹⁰⁰. This preparatory work
5 finds its catalyst within the doctrine of the *Core Socialist Values*, with various other
6 constructive and coercive strategies helping to prepare the ground for *Core Socialist*
7 *Values* to flourish, whilst also limiting the potential for alternative to take root.
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11 12 13 **Towards a Chinese Integral State**

14 The *Chinese Dream*, with the *Core Socialist Values* as its central pillar, represents a
15 shift in focus of the Socialism with Chinese Characteristics project to emphasize the
16 primacy of cultural power over economic development: of the superstructure over the
17 economic base. The *Core Socialist Values* campaign is accompanied by the increased
18 positive and negative intervention of the state in the institutions and structure of
19 Chinese civil society, including schools, colleges, universities, state media, online
20 media, social media, religious organizations, domestic NGO’s and trade unions. The
21 *Core Socialist Values* represents the ideological doctrine of the state, with the Xi
22 administration’s aggressive civil society interventions, both constructive and
23 destructive, aimed at providing fertile ground for the negotiation of consensus to that
24 doctrine, and complemented by strategic interventions that negate the potential for
25 alternative discourses to emerge. While civil society is also potentially the site for
26 counter-hegemonic movements to emerge, such is the strategic use of coercive
27 interventions, such as legislation and regulation of civil society organizations, that the
28 potential for discourses alternative to the *Chinese Dream* to emerge is reduced almost
29 completely. Nevertheless, the limiting of discourse does not itself destroy civil society:
30 rather it demonstrates that the integral state, as the sum of political and civil society,
31 of coercion and consensus, is a useful lens through which to view contemporary
32 China.
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48 **Conclusion**

49 The *Core Socialist Values* are of profound importance in identifying the potential
50 trajectory of political, social and cultural transformation in China over the remainder
51 of Xi’s leadership and beyond. They represent a distillation of the state’s vision for
52 state-society-citizen relations and a crystallization of values the CCP envision as
53 characterizing China in the 21st century. They provide both aspiration, in terms of the
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60 ¹⁰⁰ Xi 2014c, 49

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3 *national* and *societal* values depicted, and expectation, in relation to the duties
4 conferred upon Chinese citizens. They also contain formulations of normative
5 concepts which challenge and are diametrically opposed to common sense usage of
6 the same terms in western liberal thought, including freedom, democracy, civility and
7 rule of law.
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11 While the overarching intention of the CCP can reasonably be identified as the
12 maintenance of its own dominant position, the *Core Socialist Values* provide evidence
13 that this dominance and the CCPs particular brand of authoritarianism will be
14 exercised through moral and political leadership as well as through coercive means.
15 While easy to dismiss as a cynical and insincere appropriation of Confucian values,
16 which may or may not be reducible to political rhetoric, the *Core Socialist Values*,
17 fully backed by the CCP and disseminated through the ideological state apparatus,
18 much of which remains under the purview of the state, retain significant
19 transformative potential. This, of course, depends on the extent to which the CCP is
20 successful in having its values taken up by those over whom it wishes to exert
21 dominance, a fact which alone helps explain the alignment of the CCPs *Core Socialist*
22 *Values* with Confucian values.
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31 In considering why the CCP has devised a configuration of *national*, *societal*
32 and *citizenship* values, there are a number of potential factors. Many scholars have
33 argued that the basis of the CCP's legitimacy rests on their ability to continually
34 deliver significant economic growth. Double-figure GDP growth characteristic of the
35 reform era is unlikely to continue as China enters a new phase of development, with a
36 focus on transitioning from export-led manufacturing to a consumer-driven economy.
37 With a potentially reduced ability to rely on economic growth as a *quid pro quo*
38 between the Chinese state and its citizens, the Xi administration recognizes the
39 precariousness of a consent built on the provision of economic growth and
40 opportunity, especially in the current global economic climate. It is clear from several
41 speeches by Xi himself that ideological consensus and cohesion around a set of
42 distinct values, dispositions and beliefs is the objective of such efforts. While Xi's
43 predecessors have, either deliberately or by virtue of their own Chineseness, sought to
44 appeal to and exploit common-sense values, this distillation and crystallization of a
45 clear set of *national*, *societal* and *citizenship* values represents a focused effort on
46 building normative consensus and shared identity in pursuit of promoting cohesion,
47 stability and the consequent strengthening of the CCPs dominant position.
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3 It is essential here to reiterate that consensus should not be equated with
4 persuasion. Citizens in China are presented with a choice: to either resist, in a
5 conscious act of defiance, or to participate, either willingly or otherwise, constituting
6 an act of consent. It is here that the complexity of coercion, delivered through the
7 repressive state apparatus, limits the scope of potential for resistance to the *Core*
8 *Socialist Values*. While individuals themselves may be capable of resistance to any
9 inculcation of state values, the same is not true for organizations across commerce,
10 media and civil society whose very existence increasingly depends on compliance
11 with laws and regulations compelling them to operate in accordance with the state
12 vision. This mobilization of legislation to negate the potential for alternative
13 discourses to arise is a central weapon in facilitating the visibility of the *Core*
14 *Socialist Values*. Traditional and new media platforms are increasingly unable to
15 tolerate content which is potentially in opposition to the Chinese state's world view.

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25 This article has sought to analyse of the *Core Socialist Values* as the ideational
26 centerpiece of a reformation of the contemporary Chinese superstructure. The catalyst
27 for this process is the crystallization of the values of the ruling state into a coherent
28 moral, ethical and ideological vision: a process which is currently unfolding in China
29 with the propagation of the *Core Socialist Values* through the CCP propaganda
30 machine. The strategic intertwining of Confucian values with those proscribed in the
31 *Chinese Dream* discourse increases significantly the likelihood that the CCPs values
32 will find traction with Chinese people and, over time, become constitutive of common
33 sense in contemporary China, though this is a long and arduous process dependent not
34 only on the persuasion, but to a great extent on the ability of the authorities to limit
35 alternative, counter-discourses. The *Core Socialist Values* originate with political
36 society, yet, in order to be developed into a broad consensus, these ideas must be
37 communicated through civil society, defined here as the arena within the integral state
38 where consensus is negotiated.

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48 The *Core Socialist Values*, as part of a wider grand narrative of the *Chinese*
49 *Dream*, address the CCP's most pressing contemporary concerns of citizenship,
50 morality and identity and how they impact upon the maintenance of the CCPs position
51 of dominance. While the preceding eras of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu
52 Jintao have transformed the People's Republic of China for the 21st century through
53 development policies most clearly emphasizing economic transformation, Xi Jinping's
54 administration has departed from his post-Mao predecessors to elevate the reform of
55 the superstructure above that of the economy. While his predecessors have established

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3 a modern, revitalized People's Republic of China for the 21st century, the task which
4 befalls Xi Jinping and his administration, and to which these propaganda campaigns
5 are wholly committed, is to create Chinese citizens.
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Appendix 1: Glossary of Translated Terms

English	Pinyin	Chinese
48 Character Policy	48 zi fangzhen)	48字方针
a nation ruled according to the law	yifazhiguo	依法治国
a nation ruled by means of the law	yifazhiguo	以法治国
actively spreading and carrying forward the core socialist values	chuanbo he hongyang shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhiguan	积极传播和弘扬社会主义核心价值观
actively spreading and carrying forward the core socialist values	jiji chuanbo he hongyang shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhiguan	积极传播和弘扬社会主义核心价值观
be strict with oneself	yanyi lvji	严以律己
be strict with oneself, be lenient/generous to others	yanyi lvji, kuan yi dairen	严以律己，宽以待人
benevolence	ren	任
Big Head Son and Little Head Dad	datou erzi xiaotou baba	大头儿子，小头爸爸
CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI)	zhongguo gongchandang zhongyang jilv jiancha weiyuanhui	中国共产党中央纪律检查委员会
CCP Propaganda Department (CCPPD)	zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuan bu	中共中央宣传部
CCTV	zhongyang dianshitai	中央电视台
Central Guiding Committee for Building Spiritual Civilization (CGCBSC)	zhongyang jingshen wenming jianshe zhidao weiyuanhui)	中央精神文明建设指导委员会
charity	xu	恤
China Network TV	zhongguo wangluo dianshi zhi	中国网络电视制
China's Good People List	zhongguo haoren bang	中国好人榜
Chinese Dream	zhongguo meng	中国梦
Chinese Dream Baby	Meng Wa	梦娃
Chinese Dream, My Dream	zhongguo meng, wo de meng	中国梦，我的梦

citizens	gongmin	公民
Civility	wenming	文明
comprehensively and strictly govern the Party	quanmian congyan zhidang	全面从严治党
comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society	quanmian jiancheng xiaokang shehui	全面建成小康社会
comprehensively deepen reform	quanmian shenhua gaige	全面深化改革
comprehensively govern the nation according to law	quanmian yi fazhi guo	全面依法治国
Core Socialist Values	shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi guan	社会主义核心价值观
Dangjian (CCPPD Journal)	dangjian	党建
Dedication	jingye	敬业
Dedication and Devotion	jingye fengxian	敬业奉献
deliberative democracy	xieshang minzhu	协商民主
Democracy	minzhu	民主
differential mode of association	chaxu geju	差序格局
double designation	shuanggui	双规
endurance	ren	任
Equality	pingdeng	平等
Filial Love of Kin	xiao lao ai qin	孝老爱亲
filial piety (孝 xiao)	filial piety (孝 xiao)	孝
Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy	si ge quanmian zhanlue buju	四个全面战略布局
Freedom	ziyou	自由
friendship	you	友
geniality	youshan	友善
good cadres	hao ganbu	好干部
good doctors	hao yisheng	好医生
good employers	hao laoban	好老板
good faith	xin	信
good farmers	hao nongmin	好农民
good guys	hao xiaohuo	好小伙
good lawyers	hao lvshi	好律师

Good People, Everyday	haoren 365	好人 365
good sons	hao erzi	好儿子
good street cleaners	hao yanglugong	好养路工
good teachers	hao laoshi	好老师
great cause of the people's (collective) freedom to push forwards"	renmin ziyou de weida shiye tui xiang qianjin	人民自由的伟大事业推向前进
Great Virtues Illuminate China	Dà dé yào zhōnghuá	大德耀中华
harmonious society	hexie shehui	和谐社会
Harmony	hexie	和谐
harmony	he	和
headshot	miaosha	秒杀
Helping People for Happiness	bangren wei le	帮人为乐
honesty	cheng	诚
honesty	cheng	诚
Honesty and Integrity	chengshi shouxin	诚实守信
If one sets strict standards for oneself, while making allowances for others when making demands on them, one will stay clear of ill will	gong zi hou er bao zi yu ren, zi yuan yuan yi	躬自厚而薄责于人，则远怨矣
Implementation of Deepening Development of the Education System's Patriotic Education	zhongong jiaoyubu dangzu guanyu jiaoyu xitong shenru kaizhan aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu shishi yijian	中共教育部党组关于教育系统深入开展爱国主义教育实施意见
innovation	chuangye yao shi	创业要实
Integrity	chengxin	诚信
integrity	zuoren yao shi	做人要实.
Just Heroism	jianyi yongwei	见义勇为
justice	gongzheng	公正
kindness	mu	睦
love of kin	yin	姻
loyalty	zhong	忠
mass campaign	qunzhong yundong	群众运动

1	moderately prosperous society	xiaokang shehui	小康社会
2	morally superior person	junzi	君子
3	morally superior person embodies righteousness	junzi yu yu yi	君子喻于义
4	Municipal Publicity Department	shiwei xuanchuan bu	市委宣传部
5	Municipal Spiritual Guidance Committee	shiwei wenmingban	市委文明办
6	national	guojia	国家
7	national conditions	guoqing	国情
8	organizational model of association	tuanti geju	团体格局
9	patriotism	aiguo	爱国
10	People's Daily	renmin ribao	人民日报
11	People's Procuratorate	renmin jiancha yuan	人民检察院
12	People's Republic of China governs the country according to the law and establishes the nation under socialist rule of law	zhonghua renmin gongheguo shixing yi fazhi guo, jianshe shehui zhuyi fazhi guojia	中华人民共和国实行依法治国，建设社会主义法治国家
13	Pictures Tell Our Values	tu shuo women de jiazhi guan),	图说我们的价值观
14	planning	moushi yao shi	谋事要实
15	Prosperity	fuqiang	富强
16	public information advertisements	gongyi guanggao	公益广告
17	Qiushi Journal	qiushi zazhi	求是杂志
18	rejuvenation of the nation	minzu fuxing	民族复兴
19	respect	jing	敬
20	respect	jing	敬
21	righteousness	yi	义
22	rule of law	fazhi	法治
23	rule of man	renzhi	人治
24	Scientific Outlook on Development	kexue fazhan guan	科学发展观
25	self-cultivation (修身 xiushen)	self-cultivation (修身 xiushen)	修身
26	Sina Weibo	xinlang weibo	新浪微博
27	six virtues	liu de	六德
28	six virtuous actions	liu xing	六行
29	socialist rule of law	shehui zhuyi fazhi	社会主义法治
30	societal	shehui	社会
31	Some Major Questions in Comprehensively	zhonggong zhongyan guanyu quanmian tuijin yi	中共中央关于全面推进

Advancing Governing the Country According to Rule of Law	fazhi guo ruogan zhongda wenti de jue ding)	依法治国若干重大问题的决定
Stressing Civilization, Building a New Culture	jiang wenming shu xinfeng	讲文明树新风
strictly cultivate their moral character	yanyi xiushen)	严以修身
strictly exercise power and authority	yanyi yongquan	严以用权
<i>Tencent WeChat</i>	tengxun weixin	腾讯微信
the people's freedom	renmin ziyou	人民自由
<i>The Three Strict, Three Real</i>	sanyan sanshi	三严三实
three virtues of a morally superior person	junzi san de	君子三德
Two Centenary Goals	liang ge yibainian fendou mubiao	两个一百年奋斗目标
western conceptions of rule of law	xifang fazhi	西方法治
western freedom	xifang ziyou	西方自由
wisdom	zhi	智
Xiamen Daily Press	Xiamen ribao she	厦门日报社
Xinhua Media	xinhua she	新华社

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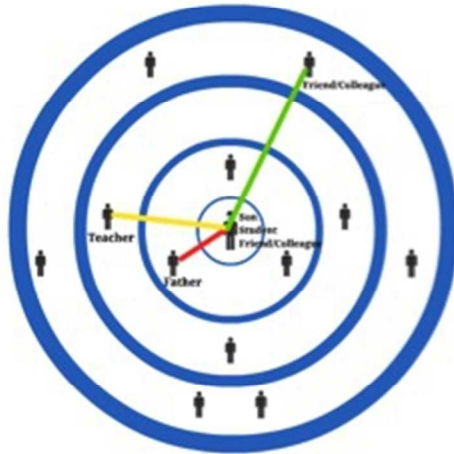
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Fei Xiaotong: Chinese Society



Differential Mode of Association - Chinese Society

The relationship you are in determines:

- (a) your relative status
- (b) manner in which you should act
- (c) your duties and responsibilities
- (d) their relative status
- (e) the manner in which others should act towards you
- (f) the duties and responsibilities of other towards you

Fig. 6

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