

China's Sui Generis plus Oxymoron*—Its Justification

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In recent years, China's overall performance stood out extraordinarily. Although the PRC is not only a socialist but also a developing country, it still has offered financial relief to European countries. None of Beijing's leaders has been directly elected by the people, but most of them have been proven to be competent. Does this mean that the "Beijing Consensus" has taken over "Washington Consensus"? Given China's vast population and its unique geographical environment and historical development, compared to European countries, China is sui generis. In the traditional Confucianism, benevolence (仁) is a virtue which human beings are born with, while the Western world is rooted deeply in the Christian culture of "original sin". As a result the rule of virtue in China contrasts the rule of law in the West, harmony vs. contradiction. China's "socialist market economy" and "Three Represents" are typical oxymorons but with great success. Since the implementation of a "socialist market economy" in 1992 there has been much more market economy than socialism. Currently, political, social and cultural sectors are lagging behind. Therefore, the gap between the rich and the poor must be reduced efficiently. Nonetheless, the corruption problem remains as another serious and important issue for the CCP. Without independent anti-corruption authorities, it would be extremely difficult for them to tackle this problem. For the time being the Mainland has to count on the leadership to set examples for others.

Keywords: China, Sui Generis, Oxymoron, Value, Leadership, Socialism à la Chine

Preface

In recent years, China's (PRC) international status has been constantly rising, especially since the outbreak of the global financial crisis in September 2008. Despite constant local small scale riots in the rural areas of the Chinese hinterland, pollution, corruption and human rights-abuse charges from the West, China's performance stood out extraordinarily in both domestic and international affairs.

Notably, the PRC is not only a socialist but also a developing country. But the Chinese government, with around 4000 USD in terms of GDP per capita, is in the position to offer financial relief to European and other countries e.g. Iceland and Spain etc. which have more than 30,000 USD per capita. How is this possible?

Moreover, none of the leaders in Beijing has been directly elected by the people. But in terms of governance capability, leadership and the general image of the government, Mainland leaders proved to be no less competent in any way than those in the West. Hu Jintao's popularity has ranged between 80% - 90% in recent years (Global Leadership Poll, 2008; Michael Chang, 2007). Compared to George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy, Naoto Kan of Japan, Lee Myung-bak of South Korea, Ma Ying-jeou of the ROC, does this phenomenon present a subversion of the Western democracy?

When former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown called an end to the 1989 "Washington Consensus" in 2009, will the "Beijing Consensus" soon take its place? (Ramo, 2004; Halper,

2010;)¹ Within this context, will "China model" jeopardize the interests of Europe and the United States? Does this indicate a conversion from the "white man's burden" to "China's responsibility" (Robert Zoellick, 2007)? Could this present a challenge to the West? When Pax Sinica prevails, will Pax Britannica and Pax Americana decline (Jacques, 2009; Zakaria, 2008; Jenkins, 2010)?

From Taiwan's perspective, since the 1980s, Taiwanese enterprises have invested over \$300 billion in the Mainland. Currently, the Mainland is Taiwan's biggest trading partner, the cross-strait trade accounts for 40% of Taiwan's overall foreign trade.² Now the ECFA (Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement) signed between Taipei and Beijing is effective since January 1, 2011, Taiwan's economic dependence on the Mainland is about to increase. A kind of "Community of fate" (Schicksalsgemeinschaft) between the two sides is taking shape. Therefore, the Mainland's stability and development are absolutely crucial and even vital to Taiwan. This article tries to

¹"Washington Consensus" was a reform package regarding fiscal, trade and development policies promoted for Eastern European and Latin American states by IMF, World Bank, and the US. Prime Minister Gordon Brown: G20 Will Pump Trillion Dollars Into World Economy. Sky News. 2 April 2009.

<http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Politics/Prime-Minister-Gordon-Brown-G20-Will-Pump-One-Trillion-Dollars-Into-World-Economy/Article/200904115254629> "Beijing Consensus" was first used by Joshua Cooper Ramo in his same title book. The first guideline involves a "commitment to innovation and constant experimentation." Secondly, the sustainability of the economic system and an even distribution of wealth, along with GDP, are important indicators of progress. Thirdly, policy of self-determination, keep the superpowers in check and assure their own financial sovereignty. Stefan Halper calls the China model "market authoritarian model".

²99年7月份兩岸貿易情勢分析, Situation of cross-strait trade on July 2010

<http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=87609&ctNode=5630&mp=1>

*Oxymoron is an epigrammatic effect, by which contradictory terms are used in conjunction, e.g. wise fool or living death. Shen, Yeshayahu (1987), "On the structure and understanding of poetic oxymoron". Poetics Today 8 (1): 105-122.

determine reasons for some significant aspects of China's status, values, practices, performances and challenges.

Sui Generis

Lately, there is a popular jingle spreading around academic circles in Beijing:³

"In 1949 socialism saved China,
In 1979 capitalism saved China,
In 1989 China saved socialism,
In 2009 China saved capitalism."

In 2010 the PRC successfully kept its economic growth rate at 8.6% through expanding its domestic demand and earned a foreign trade surplus of \$183.1 billion.⁴ As of in March 2010 China held a foreign reserves totaling 3.44 trillion.⁵ According to recent Forbes magazine report, there are 1,011 billionaires in the world and 64 of whom are from China.⁶ In September 2010, China became number one holder of US state bonds, worth \$883.5 billion, which exceeding Japan's \$865 billion. In June 2011, China increases its US bonds to \$1.165 trillion.⁷

In November 2010, Forbes put Hu Jintao on the top of its list of the 20 most influential persons in the world, ahead of President Obama.⁸ 2010 the PRC has already surpassed Japan and became the world's second largest economy just next to the U.S. The Mainland has been pushed to the center of the world stage, however, apparently it is not yet ready for that position. Despite the financial crisis, the United States remains the world's single superpower with its GDP (\$14 trillion) three times as that of China.

China's vast population, coupled with its unique geographical environment and historical development, China actually can not be regarded as a common state on a European scale, but should be seen as a special world state (Weltstaat). This sui generis in the world has its uninterrupted five thousand-year history and a great capability to assimilate other ethnicities as well as a rather strong national consciousness (in contrast to nationalism) (Fairbank, 1992; Peterson, 2002; Gellner, 2009; Musgrave, 1997). It is one of world's oldest empires, comparable to the ancient Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire. All of these Empires collapsed long ago, but

³ 中國一甲子的回顧, Review of China's six Decades
<http://www.booyee.com.cn/bbs/thread.jsp?threadid=608742&forumid=0&et=1>.

⁴ 中國 2010 年全年貿易順差 1831 億美元,
<http://www.wretch.cc/blog/JaguarCSIA/16213915>; 去年中國經濟成長率 10.3%,
[http://money.chinatimes.com/news/news-content.aspx?id=20110120002073&cid=1208](http://money.chinatimes.com/news/news-content.aspx?id=20110120002073&cid=1208;);

⁵ 中國外匯存底破 3 兆 創新高
http://www.worldjournal.com/view/aChinanews/12798260/article-%E4%B8%AD%E5%9C%8B%E5%A4%96%E5%8C%AF%E5%AD%98%E5%BA%95%E7%A0%B43%E5%85%86-%E5%89%B5%E6%96%B0%E9%A%B%98?instance=china_bull

⁶ 福布斯 2010 年富豪榜中國大陸 64 名富豪名單, 2010 Forbes Rich List 64 are from China
http://www.zwbk.org/zh-tw/Lemma_Show/2568.aspx

⁷ 美国之音网站日前发表文章, 题为《中美因中国持有美债而“共生”》;
http://ed-china.stnn.cc/diplomacy/201101/t20110101_1486853.html.

“美債降級, 中國損失有多大?”
<http://news.cnyes.com/Content/20110825/KDYNS2D9Z5LLA.shtml?c=detail>.

⁸ Gallery: #1 Hu Jintao Powerful People - Forbes.com
<http://forbes.com/wealth/powerful-people/gallery>.

the framework of the Chinese Empire remains.

Take China's population. The most populated EU-nation is Germany, with a population of 80 million it is no more than that of the Sicuan Province. The other big nations have the population of two or three provinces, such as the United States and Russia. In addition, more than 90% of the 1.3 billion Mainland people are Han Chinese, the rest come from 55 ethnic minorities which account for only less than 10%. But the minorities occupy half of the land, while agricultural population accounts for about 50% of the total population (in comparison with only about 2% - 5% in European countries). Moreover, the Mainland's coastal areas are more progressive in contrast to the vast and backward hinterland.

For centuries China has developed the pattern of Sino-centrism with a radial symmetry (actinomorphy) between the big Chinese Empire and other small nations around it. Suzerainty was the essence of their separate bilateral relations in stead of equality of nations and sovereignty. Then in the 1840s, China learned about the international law and the concept of sovereignty, also suffered disgrace and humiliation at the hands of the gunboat diplomacy of the West. In 1820 China had shared almost 1/3 of the world GDP. But in 1950 China's share has shrunk to 3%.⁹

But since 1949, the CCP has eliminated all traces of the West in the PRC and leaned on the then Soviet Union to create a Chinese style communist state. But this cooperation between Beijing and Moscow lasted only 10 years as the Soviet advisers suddenly withdrew from China in 1960. After two decades of a "policy of self-reliance," the "reform and opening policy" was initiated in 1978 and the influence of the West reentered China. Since the 1990s, as the post-Cold War atmosphere spread around the world, Asian values rose in East Asia along with the traditional Confucianism.

China exported revolution from the 1950s until the end of the 1970's and then commodities since the 1980's. Could it now start to export its values? Could the value of Confucianism become an alternative to the Western values?

Values: Confucianism

The fundamental difference between the traditional Chinese and Western values lies in different basic perceptions of human nature. In traditional Confucianism (Yao, 2000; Ivanhoe, 1996)¹⁰, benevolence (仁) is a virtue which human beings are born with. The doctrine of good human nature (性善) is the main ideological trend in Chinese culture (Watson, 2003).¹¹ The rule of morality as Confucius describes: "ruling by law, governing by punishment, losing sense of shame, ruling by morality, governing by etiquette, maintaining a sense of shame and standard" (道之以政, 齊之以刑, 民免無恥。道之以德, 齊之以禮, 有恥且格。論語, 為政篇). In fact, all true

⁹ "China & World GDP, <<http://idmation.com/china/?p=77>>.

¹⁰ Xinzhong Yao, An Introduction to Confucianism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Ivanhoe, Philip J. "Self-Cultivation in Early Confucianism," Francis Seaman Visiting Scholar Lecture Series, Philosophy Department, University of Idaho, 26 April 1996.

¹¹ Although another Confucian philosopher Xunzi (荀子, 313 BC-238 BC) believed, just counter to that of Mencius, man's inborn characters are evil and need to be curbed through education and ritual. His thought can not be treated as main stream of the Chinese tradition. Daniel A. Bell, China's New Confucianism (Princeton University Press 2007).

education is to awaken consciousness of pupils to undertake self-study and self-discipline. The top-grade man is the one who is able to keep himself under control in order to be his own master. Those who can not control themselves will have to be controlled by others.

As for the Western world, which is rooted deeply in the Christian culture of “original sin”, the doctrine of good human nature can hardly develop e.g. Thomas Hobbes’s (1588-1679) discourse of “war of all against all” (*bellum omnium contra omnes*).¹² This kind of thinking has a profound impact on the modern western state philosophy. Therefore “the rule of law” has always been upheld in the West where contract theory (John Lock, 1632-1704; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712-1778) (Kary, 2000)¹³ is actually a manifestation of self-governance of Private Law. In the end even the legitimacy of the State has to rely on contracts (Bolton/ Dewatripont, 2005; Martimort, 2008).

In the view of Confucianism, the major flaw in the rule of law is that the strong has the right to interpret the contract and can bully the weak e.g. Herbert Spencer’s (1820-1903) “Social Darwinism” (Hawkins, 1997). This idea added fuel to capital colonial imperialism which combined with liberalism and individualism. These ideas deepened the internal contradictions of the Western world through their own struggles e.g. between bourgeoisie and aristocracy, working class and bourgeoisie etc. and consequently the people of the non-Western world had to suffer from colonization. When the imperialist powers began to colonize the other continents, they used the Bible to expropriate for land and resources.

“Benevolence” is the Confucian ideal of the highest character. It’s not abstract or distant, but is exercised in the daily life of the Chinese. It teaches that people should handle their relationships properly in order to build a harmonious society. The Western liberalism, viewed from the point of Confucianism, is tangled in individualism and puts too much emphasis on individual freedom. As a result, the strong bullies the weak.

In contrast, the Confucianism has always advocated being “strict with oneself and lenient towards others, blames will be far away” (躬自厚，而薄責於人，則遠怨矣，衛靈公，15-14). The rights of others should be respected and not squeezed, even if there are chances to do so. Only as such, one could be an honorable gentleman. As for rights, sometimes deliberately giving up an idea would reveal the self-restraint of a virtuous person. This is the reason that Neo-Confucianism can ease the excessive sense of right.

Confucianism has already contributed a lot to strengthen the liberalism in Europe since the 17th century. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) asserted that humans are rational and therefore each person is his own purpose (*Selbstzweck*, end in itself, 自我目的) and can not be used as a tool. In fact, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), Christian Wolff (1679-1754) et al. were very much influenced by the then Neo-Confucianism, and their rationales were the basis of Kant’s transcendental idealism

¹²“Thomas Hobbes,” *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Volume 281: *British Rhetoricians and Logicians, 1500-1660*, Second Series, Detroit: Gale, 2003, pp.130-144; *Leviathan*, Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002.

¹³Although Hobbes (authoritarian monarchy), Locke (liberal monarchy) and Rousseau (liberal republicanism) have different ideas on Social Contract the author wants to underscore only the Contract and the rule of law itself in order to distinguish them from the Confucius rule of virtue.

(Perkins, 2004; Palmquist, 1954; Shen, 1985; Zhu, 2005; Li, 2006; Fuchs’ 2006).¹⁴ Kant’s ethic of “categorical imperative” (定言令式) is similar to the virtue of humanity of Confucius (WENZEL, 2006; AXINN, 2006).

Furthermore, the relation between humans and nature is also important. Over the past three hundred years, the constant pursuit of wealth through colonial imperialism resulted in over-exploitation and serious damage to the environment. After World War II, the non-Western countries also strove to catch up, affecting the global climate even more severely. Neo-Confucianism asserts that humans and nature are not separable. How could one dare not to cherish materials and lives (民胞物與)! Therefore, any exploitation of nature also had its inherent limitations. This can only be reached by the “self cultivation” ability of Neo-Confucianism based on the self-improvement of personality.

In “Li Ji, Li Yun, Da Tong” (禮記, Book of Rites, 禮運大同, Chapter of Great Harmony) Confucius describes the “Utopia” of Chinese intellectuals on equal rights of people with socialist elements.¹⁵ In fact, Confucius stressed that “inequality is more dreaded than scarcity” (不患寡而患不均). Protect the rights of survival and development, take care of the interests of all people so that they can get what they want and contribute to social harmony and stability.

In regard to the Confucian principle of group priority, family or clan takes the center stage and then is expanded to country and the world. Especially the “Da Xue” (大學, The Great Learning) promotes the virtues of reciprocity. If necessary, personal interests could be sacrificed for the good of group interests. The combination of legitimate interests of the individual with the common interests of society is in contrast to the Western binary thought of individual and group.

In the view of Confucianism, the principle of interaction

¹⁴Franklin Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light*. (Cambridge University Press, 2004); F. Nietzsche even called Kant the “Chinaman of Königsberg”, Steve Palmquist, *HOW ‘CHINESE’ WAS KANT? The Philosopher*, Volume LXXXIV No. 1. Kant also called Confucius “the Chinese Socrates”, Helmut von Glasenapp, *Kant und die Religionen des Osten* (Kitzingen: Holzner, 1954): 89; 沈福偉, *中西文化交流史* (上海: 上海人民出版社, 1985): 448-450; Shen Fuwei, *The History of Sino-Western Cultural Exchange* (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1985): 448-450; 朱謙之, *中國哲學對歐洲的影響* (上海: 上海世紀出版集團, 2005): 219-353; Zhu Qianzhi, *The Influence of Chinese Philosophy on Europe* (Shanghai: Shanghai Century Publishing Group, 2005): 219-353; Li Wenchao/ Hans Poser, *Leibniz’s Positive View of China*, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, Volume 33, Issue 1, 17-33, March 2006; THOMAS FUCHS, *THE EUROPEAN CHINA-RECEPTIONS FROM LEIBNIZ TO KANT* Translation by MARTIN SCHÖNFELD, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, Volume 33, Issue 1, 2006, 35-49.

¹⁵禮運篇大同章, THE CHAPTER OF GREAT HARMONY (TA TUNG), “When the Great Principle prevails, the world is a Commonwealth in which rulers are selected according to their wisdom and ability. Mutual confidence is promoted and good neighborliness cultivated. Hence, men do not regard as parents only their own parents, nor do they treat as children only their own children. Provision is secured for the aged till death, employment for the able-bodied, and the mean of growing up for the young. Helpless widows and widowers, orphans and the lonely, as well as the sick and the disabled, are well cared for. Men have their respective occupations and women their homes. They do not like to see wealth lying idle, yet they do not keep it for their own gratification. They despise indolence, yet they do not use their energies for energies for their own benefit. In this way, selfish scheming are repressed, and robbers, thieves and other lawless men no longer exist, and there is no need for people to shut their outers. This is called the Great Harmony (TA TUNG).

http://www.tccg.gov.tw/sys/SM_theme?page=4555892d.

between countries is to do your own job well. Whether and how countries would like to associate with others should be left to their own decisions. Therefore, since ancient times, China has always been faithful to others. In other words, treat others faithfully and demonstrate honesty to all. Even forgiveness is a way to demonstrate selflessness.

If all foreign policies could originate in the ideology of benevolence, all countries would be benefited. Hence, there is no reason for others not to have good relationships with China. In contrast to Christopher Columbus (1451-1506), admiral Zheng He (鄭和, 1371-1433) made seven voyages reaching as far as Eastern Africa (Menzies, 2002 & 2008; Ptak, 2007; Zhang, 1992; Zhu, 2003). But he never occupied any lands or founded any colonies, only supported the weak and eliminated piracy to uphold international justice.

In fact, the traditional Chinese benevolent politics could help maintain the basic principles of peaceful relations among nations with mutual respect and mutual appreciation. Thus, it is wise to respect the history and culture of each country. Being human, everyone is the “essence of heaven and earth” (天地之精) but born in different places. Therefore, each nation has created its own customs and values. It is believed that if the Chinese had been born in Africa, Chinese history and culture would not be better than what is found in the African nations. Therefore, conviction in human faith is undoubtedly a necessary condition for the ideal world. To create long-term peaceful coexistence in the international society, the status quo of all countries has to be respected.

According to Confucianism, every country is its own master and may choose its own way of life. Western countries experienced during the Enlightenment that the emerging bourgeoisie could break out of the paternalistic regime. As Kant indicates, the so-called “patriarchal power” is the most dictatorial regime ever, and always treats people as their children in the belief that they do not know what is good to them. The contemporary democratization of the Western countries, in fact, is the process of casting aside the “paternalistic regime” (Demenchonok, 2009).¹⁶ But paradoxically, the Western countries always treat the non-Western countries as “children” for their own good (white men’s burden)!

Now China’s rise is clear evidence showing that a non-Western nation is perfectly capable of pursuing its own way of life without any guidance from the West. If China can do it, why not other non-Western countries? Importantly, each country should refer to its own realistic circumstances to decide their own future.

Over the centuries, the international exchanges have been affected by Western colonial imperialism. If these exchanges only concentrate on “profit”(利) rather than “justice”(義), the

¹⁶“Kant strongly opposed moral utilitarianism. Similarly, his philosophy of law was developed with systematic criticism of political paternalism (which is the flip side of dependence). Kant developed his definition of individual freedom in opposition to authoritarian paternalism, utilitarian arbitrariness, and the “despotism of paternalistic benevolence.” In contrast to paternalism, Kant elaborates a concept of autonomy, distinguishing its three varieties: moral, utilitarian, and civic. The opposite of paternalism is the rule of law, which is the basis for civil society. The rule of law is granted by three types of legal norms: human rights, legal guarantees of social equality, and democratic rights (or the rights of an active citizenship).”
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1536-7150.2008.00624.x/full>.

result would be the strong bullying the weak and majority intimidating minority. Within this context the common valid moral principles of Confucius could be a remedy.

That is to view other countries as his own and the world as one family. China although, since ancient times, was deemed to be the “Celestial Empire” (天朝), rewarded generously by all its tribute states. This is the so-called “thin in thick out” (厚往薄來). China never interfered in the internal affairs of these states or imposed values on them unless requested. On the contrary, many vassal states envied China and sent envoys to do business and acquire knowledge (為政以德, 譬如北辰, 居其所而眾星拱之).¹⁷ For the reconstruction of a fairer and more equitable international order, can Confucianism be a reference?

In summary, all values and ideologies have their own origin. Whether those of the West can be applied to China as they are a great challenge? Comparing to the former Eight-Nation Alliance (八國聯軍) in 1900 that invaded China to quell the Chinese Boxer Rebellion and the G8 of today, there is only one difference. The countries in the Eight-Nation Alliance are: Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, the United States, Japan, Russia and Italy. Only Austria is replaced by Canada in the G8. According to their understanding, great powers become hegemonic. Whether China will also fall into this pattern remains to be seen. Judging from China’s tradition and its current performance, things look to be quite different.

Personalities: More Domestically Made

Comparing the politicians of the ministerial level between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait reveals great differences. Take Taiwan’s current Wu Dun-yi (吳敦義) cabinet of 27 ministers. 16 of them have PhDs and 10 of them were educated in the US.¹⁸ In the Mainland, among the current 36 ministers there are only 8 with PhD, and seven of those were locally educated. Altogether there is only one minister in the PRC’s central government with US background.¹⁹ Notable is also the fact that most of these Mainland ministers obtained their degrees after they had already started working in the government.

Take President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) as an example. He graduated from a university in Taiwan before he got his PhD in the US.²⁰ His first post in the government was as Deputy Secretary of the President and then he took posts as KMT Deputy Secretary-General, Council, Minister of Justice, Taipei Mayor until he was finally elected as President in 2008. Now let’s take a look at Hu Jintao (胡錦濤).²¹ After graduating from university he first worked as a local staff in one of the local branches of Ministry of Water Supply and Electricity before he assumed the post of deputy secretary of Party branch, secretary

¹⁷“He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it.” (論語, 為政篇) The Analects, Chapter of Politics,
<http://www.en8848.com.cn/yingyu/03/n-137303.html>.

¹⁸ 中華民國行政院, Executive Yuan of the Republic of China,
<http://www.ey.gov.tw/np.asp?ctNode=977&mp=1>.

¹⁹ 中華人民共和國國務院, State Council of the People’s Republic of China,
http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-01/25/content_253773.htm.

²⁰ 中華民國總統府, Presidential Office of the Republic of China,
<http://www.president.gov.tw/>.

²¹ 中華人民共和國主席, President of the People’s Republic of China,
http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-01/23/content_249791.htm.

of the Communist Youth League of Gansu Provincial Committee. After serving as the first secretary of the Communist Youth League Central and party secretary of Guizhou and Tibet, he returned to the central government.

Hu serves as current President of the PRC and Chairman of the CCP after serving for several years as deputy of these posts. The same goes to the comparison between the Major of Taipei and the Major of Shanghai. Therefore, Taiwan leaders have better knowledge of foreign affairs and foreign language skills, but lack grass-roots experiences and can not receive the vox populi well enough to accommodate their needs. Mainland leaders, on the contrary, have more complete political practices from the bottom to the top, but lack foreign experiences.

Moreover, among previous generations of CCP leaders, there are only few college graduates. Now the situation has been upgraded. The current fourth-generation leaders are mainly students of natural sciences, e.g. Hu Jintao's major is water conservation engineering and Wen Jiabao's (溫家寶)²² is a geologist. But the upcoming fifth generation is full of students of social sciences, e.g. vice Chairman of the PRC, designated heir of Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping (習近平) has a PhD in law and vice Premier Li Keqiang (李克強) has a PhD in economics.

Systems: Oxymoron

For various reasons there are complex and diverse forms of democracy in the world. The differences between Western-style democracy and Marxist Leninist-style democracy are especially large. Many scholars in the West do not distinguish between the significance of the same term having different origins e.g. democracy and human rights. We are all familiar with the core value of Western democracy, but the socialist democracy arises after the socialist transformation of society can only mean a proletariat dictatorship.²² Because, at least theoretically, all other counter-revolutionary forces have been eliminated, the people in a socialist country can not, but support their government.

But in China things have changed. In the 1980's, Deng Xiaoping's (鄧小平) idea of a "socialist market economy" is nothing, but a selective synthesis of the advantages of market economy and socialism by way of *Aufhebung*. Socialism à la Chine is critical and can inherit the good traditions of liberalism such as fair competition and independent personality etc. But it must refer to the actual situation in China and its traditions to modernize the country.

Furthermore, in 2004 the "Three Represents" (三個代表) was written into the PRC Constitution.²⁴ Accordingly, the capitalists, now known as "private entrepreneurs" have also joined the CCP and become a "representative of China's advanced social productive forces". Now the two actual opposing forces,

²² 中華人民共和國國務院, State Council of the People's Republic of China, http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-01/25/content_253773.htm.

²³ In accordance with Mao: workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, On People's Democratic Dictatorship, 1949. 論人民民主專政——紀念中國共產黨二十八周年(1949年6月20日), On People's Democratic Dictatorship - to Commemorate the Twenty-Eighth Anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party (June 20, 1949) <http://www.jswl.cn/course/maogai/wx/lrmmzzz.htm>.

²⁴ 三個代表重要思想, Important Thoughts of the Three Represents, http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2003-01/21/content_699933.htm

proletariats and capitalists start working together, which can indeed be regarded as a special characteristic of Chinese socialism. Besides the "Three Represents" stipulates that the CCP represents the direction of China's advanced culture.

Moreover, the "Three Represents" also indicates that the CCP is the "representative of the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of people", which also shows that the CCP, which used to be led by the workers and peasants, is becoming an all people's party (Volkspartei, comparable to the Godesberg Program of Germany's social-democratic party, SPD in 1959?). However, the CCP still upholds the "Four Persistence" (四項堅持)²⁵, which serves as the most important pillar of China's socialist system. Therefore, in principle, the CCP one-party rule is self-guaranteed. Now, the greatest challenge facing the CCP lying ahead is how to maintain long-term rule. Are "socialist market economy" and "Three Represents" typical oxymorons?

Policies: Socialism à la Chine

Since the "Reform and Opening Policy" in 1978, the "Socialist Market Economy" has generated an annual economic growth rate of around 10%. It is a successful experiment in the co-operation between major public enterprises and its supplemented private enterprises under the rule of democratic centralism (in contrast to the Social Market Economy of Germany's Ludwig Erhard) (Zhou, 1999). It's surely another special characteristic of the Chinese political economy.

Thereafter, could the increasing proportion of the private sector change the economic base? Will this affect the transformation of the super structure? This Chinese experiment could present another challenge to the Marxist theory on the relation between the economic basis and upper structure in the long run. Thus, the socialist ideologies of the West will all be sinicized when they are adopted by the Chinese. This unique "socialism with Chinese characteristics" gives the CCP a lot of room to maneuver in its development.

In 1985 Deng Xiaoping, the main architect of China's economic reform, initiated a policy to let part of the people to become rich at first. This policy has proven to be very effective, but it also has a serious downside. It is true that since the year 2000 some people living in coastal areas et al. have reached the level of "Xiaokang" (小康) (Deng, 1994; Hu, 2007)²⁶, but at the same time the gap between the rich and the poor also between people living urban and rural areas has widened as well as economic and social differences have increased.

Therefore, beginning in 2004, the establishment of a "socialist harmonious society" was implemented since 2004 by the CCP and the scientific concept of development was written in the statute of the 17th CCP Party Congress in 2007.²⁷ In the upcoming People's Congress in 2011, the 12th Five Year Plan

²⁵ 四項基本原則, Four Basic Principles, These are: 1. Uphold the socialist road; 2. Adhere to the dictatorship of the proletariat (the people's democratic dictatorship); 3. Uphold the leadership of the Communist Party; 4. Upholding Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2003-01/20/content_698005.htm.

²⁶ Xiaokang originated from Confucianism is to describe a basically stable and sufficient society and is currently defined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization as having an Engel's coefficient of 40% - 50%.

²⁷ 構建社會主義和諧社會, Construct socialist harmonious society, http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2003-01/20/content_698005.htm.

will concentrate on balancing the industrial development between coastal and rural areas, medical care systems, housing problems and cultural industries etc.²⁸

Domestic Performances: Competence & Consolidation

Because of the ban on forming new political parties, the Mainland's internet has become the most important democratic platform.²⁹ All political leaders, from central to local levels, must pay attention to the opinions expressed on the internet because "water can carry a boat, but also can capsize it" (水可載舟亦可覆舟), as the old Chinese saying advises. This is a special way of communication between governments and their people. When local unrest occurs, can censoring of media reports be helpful to stabilize the society? Will riots between different ethnic groups escalate when actual reports are shown on daily television? During the Iraq War, the US government has also done the same.

Currently the Chinese government has demonstrated its competence in handling crises, e.g., SARS in 2003 and organizing mega activities, e.g., the Olympic Games in 2008 and the Shanghai World Expo in 2010. Also in aerospace engineering, the Chinese government has made great progress. In China the party has the upper hand in the government. How can a political party—CCP is the largest political organization in the world with 80 million members – equivalent to the whole population of Germany—function? To assemble all party secretaries together from Hu Jintao down to the village level, there are altogether one million. In particular, given the massive regional, economic and ethical differences within the Mainland, democratic centralism with partial political reform seems to be necessary for the time being.

In the last decade, Shanghai has completed nearly one subway per year. The rapid construction of a continent-wide rail and automobile transportation system is even more amazing because the relevant provinces can link all the roads together under central coordination. Moreover, in 1984 Deng Xiaoping had been able to disarm more than one million soldiers in a relatively smooth way.

Once the Mainland eliminated political strongman, personal rule had been bound to fail, establishing the rule of law was unavoidable. In the 1990s Deng Xiaoping designated not only Jiang Zemin (江澤民) but also Hu Jintao with the aim of protecting the perpetrators of the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident.³⁰ Currently the fifth generation's succession is emerging. Xi Jinping is now Vice President of the PRC and

²⁸ 授权发布：中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十二个五年规划的建议，CCP Central Committee's Suggestions on the 12th Five Year Plan http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-10/27/c_12708501.htm.

²⁹ 乔木等：网络民主、媒体政治与中国民主发展，Hu Chiaoou etc., *Cyber Democracy, Media Politics and Development of China's Democracy*, <http://www.chinaelections.org/newsinfo.asp?newsid=173394>; Wang Weigu, Review on the Issue of Democracy since China's Reform and Opening up, *Journal of Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*, 2009-05; LONG Miao, *Contemporary Cyber-democracy Problems in China* *Journal of Hunan First Normal College*, 2006-03.

³⁰ 程翔：從習近平接班看中共權力交替模式，Cheng Xian, *CCP's Power Transition Model viewed by Xi Jinping's Pattern*, <http://www.mediachinese.com/node/15461>; 胡錦濤在江被任命前就已經成為江的繼承人，Hu Jintao, Jiang was appointed heir before Jiang became successor, <http://www.kanzhongguo.com/node/24512>.

also CCP Vice Chairman of the Military Committee. Xi can also make the best use of his position to get familiar with major political practices and train cadres for a smooth succession. Therefore, in general, the continuity in the CCP's overall policies can be expected.

International Performances: Chinese Marshall Plan?

Take the Mainland's foreign trade and aid policy. In 2009 China had a huge trade surplus with EU (186.3 billion USD) and US (226.8 billion USD),³¹ but China's overall trade surplus amounted to only 196 billion USD in the same year.³¹ In other words, the \$200 billion plus which China earned from industrial nations was spent in the rest of the world, mostly in developing nations. Moreover, in 2006, China canceled \$10 billion of Africa's debt. In 2009 China invested about \$1.36 billion in Africa, and agreed to provide \$10 billion in low-interest loans, plus \$1 billion to assist small and medium enterprises in Africa without any strings of linkage. Isn't that a kind of balancing act between the rich and the poor in the world by the Chinese?

This year the Mainland has bought €400 million in Spanish bonds. During Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Europe in October 2010, he also promised to purchase Greek bonds, and offered them a \$5 billion loan to order Chinese vessels in order to help bail out Greece from its financial crisis. However, European countries expressed dissatisfaction over China's support of the totalitarian rule in African countries, which contradicted with Beijing's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Beijing's leaders believe that their greatest contribution to the world (1/4 of the population) is to do their own job well. Since the global financial crisis, China's 8.6% growth in 2009 serves as one of the major pillars to support the global economy. According to UNO, the Mainland's contribution to the world's economic growth rate was 50%.³³ While EU exports to other countries in that year dropped significantly, its exports to the Mainland rose 4%.³⁴

So far, the Chinese government has made great efforts to help bail out Iceland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and other countries. China has also promised to provide further financial

³¹ EU-China trade in facts and figures, 20 July 2010

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/352&type=HTML>, US-China Trade Statistics and China's World Trade Statistics, <http://www.uschina.org/statistics/tradetable.html>.

³² 2009年中國貿易順差驟降三成 仍超過德成第一大出口國 2010年01月11日，

http://cn.chinagate.cn/economics/2010-01/11/content_19214902.htm.

ber-democracy Problems in China, *Journal of Hunan First Normal College*, 2006-03.

³³ 联合国报告显示今年中国对世界经济贡献将达50%。According to the UN Report mainland's contribution to world economic growth rate was 50%, 2009-01-17,

<http://news.163.com/09/0117/01/4VQT05F70001124J.html>; 新聞分析：世界經濟形勢與中國對復甦的貢獻，News Analysis: World Economic Situation and China's Contribution to the Recovery, 2010年11月07日，

<http://finance.sina.com/bg/economy/xinhuanet/20101107/0150169919.html>

³⁴ 商務部：中歐建交35年來經貿合作關係日益深化，Ministry of Commerce, 35 Years of Diplomatic Relations between China and European Union the Economic and Trade Relations Gradually Deepen, 2010.4.29. http://big5.gov.cn/gate/big5/www.gov.cn/gzdt/2010-04/29/content_1595678.htm.

support to these countries in the future. But the EU blames China for its poor human rights record and refusal to allow the Renminbi to strengthen. China's image in the UK, France and Germany has deteriorated in the recent years mainly because of value differences and China's overall performance (d'Hooghe, 2010). Isn't that a paradox?

What if China became destabilized by inner turmoil caused for instance by the Nobel Committee's decision or Renminbi appreciation causing massive unemployment? Wouldn't the West have shot itself in the foot? The EU changed its human rights policy toward China in 1997 from a policy of linkage to consultation. This could be an efficient way to reach mutual acceptable results.

Domestic Challenges: Pollution & Social Injustice

For the sake of rapid industrial development, China's pollution problem has been neglected for a long time. According to the report of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006, China has 16 of the world's 20 most polluted cities.³⁵ Only 1 percent of the country's 560 million city inhabitants (2007) breathe air deemed safe by the European Union.³⁶ On the other hand, China has achieved some improvements in environmental protection during the recent years e.g. forest cover, sewage and rubbish treatment facilities, renewable energy technologies and wind turbines, and solar panels production.³⁷

With regard to social injustice, first and foremost is the case of the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. Since some of the perpetrators are still alive the possibility of a total rectification in the near future is slim. Moreover, incidents constantly break out involving press freedom, freedom of demonstration, freedom of belief, judicial protection, freedom of mobility and the expropriation of land for public purposes etc.³⁸

Take the recent fire disaster in Shanghai for example. More than 100,000 people gathered in the streets to make their dissatisfaction heard in the aftermath (Hogg, 2010), because the Shanghai authorities covered up the news of the most essential part of the fire and only held several construction workers for responsible. The fire could have revealed evidence of

³⁵ 世衛組織：世界污染最重 20 城市 中國占 16 席，WHO: 20 world's most polluted cities in China accounted for 16,

<http://finance.21cn.com/news/cjyw/2006/10/08/2993689.shtml>.

³⁶ As China Roars, Pollution Reaches Deadly Extremes,

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/26/world/asia/26china.html?_r=1.

³⁷ "Can China be green by 2020?". BBC. 2009-04-02,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7972125.stm>; "China plans 10 major steps to spark growth as fiscal, monetary policies ease. English_Xinhua". News.xinhuanet.com. 2008-11-09.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-11/09/content_10332422.htm;

China Leads Major Countries With \$34.6 Billion Invested in Clean Technology,

<http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2010/03/25/25climatewire-china-leads-major-countries-with-346-billion-15729.html?pagewanted=1>;

China steams ahead on clean energy,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8587319.stm>; Bradsher, Keith, Jan 30, 2010, China leads global race to make clean energy, New York Times,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/31/business/energy-environment/31renew.html>.

³⁸ Review of China by the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, 7 February 2009,

<http://www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/archive.asp?go=090209>;

Human Rights in China, <http://www.hrchina.org/public/index>.

corruption. That is the typical way to protect the authorities involved at the expense of the victims.

All in all, different kinds of social injustice are accumulating but the CCP can still tackle these problems by way of divide et impera and adequate compensation. On the other hand there is no organizations which can link all these socially explosive problems together. The "Charter 2008" could have done so, but its idea was too far reaching for the people and it has already been nipped in the bud.

International Challenges: Cognitive Dissonance

Along with the rise of China since the 1990s, Western politicians and academics have proposed the theory of China collapse, the theory of Chinese threat, the theory of opportunity in China and finally the theory of China's responsibility and so on (Chang, 2002; Yee, 2002; Gertz, 2000; Oi, 2010).³⁹ China has become a bitter pill hard for Westerners to swallow. How can they accommodate such a rich and prosperous, but developing communist ruled by dictatorship? Isn't it an oxymoron? Should the West confront or co-operate with China? Should the West balance or bandwagon with China? Maybe the concept of cognitive dissonance in line with psychology can be seen as an explanation to it (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones 1999) just like a person addicted to smoking and is well aware of the harm of smoking. But he or she still defends smoking and ignores its harmfulness rather than face the reality because accepting the true world mean self-denial.

In particular, when the traditional Chinese Confucian benevolent politics (中國王道論) emerges, these countries become schizophrenic and speechless. This happens also in Taiwan. Due to the separation since the 1950s, Taiwan was profoundly impacted by the ideology of the West, especially by the United States. Some Taiwanese politicians and academics, especially those with US background also show a sense of panic along with the rise of China. The feeling of uncertainty over the sustainability of the US economy is obvious.

Therefore, it can be inaccurate or even unethical to judge the case of the Mainland with Western standards such as the relationship between economic development and environmental protection. Western industrial countries also generated a lot of pollution in the early stage of the Industrial Revolution. Things improved when they became more developed and they tackled the issue partly through the exodus of their sunset industries to developing countries. The same situation has also happened in Taiwan, and now China follows. Isn't that a common process of development? That involves the sharing of carbon dioxide emissions. Wouldn't it be fairer if the industrial countries started counting their emissions from the Industrial Revolution?

The human rights issue is another example. According to the "Records of the Grand Historian" (史記, 管晏列傳), politeness and courtesy can only be maintained on a full stomach (倉廩實而知禮節, 衣食足而知榮辱). The development of human rights also has certain stages and it must be judged in accordance with the national circumstances of each and every country. In the 19th century, Western

³⁹ Experts lash out at 'China responsibility' theories,

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2010-08/20/content_11179857.htm.

Why Is China Supposed to Be Responsible for the World?

http://www.bjreview.com.cn/special/node_45061.htm.

imperialists took advantage of the huge injustice by usurping Chinese national assets (estimated equivalent to 71.2 billion RMB) to develop their industry.⁴⁰ And now they ask the Chinese to adopt Western universal human rights values. Is that a fair game? Therefore, it would be more appropriate to compare the current development in the Mainland with its own status 10 or even 20 or 50 years in the past. The standard of living of most Chinese people is substantially improved and the scale of freedom of speech is also significantly relaxed. This shows a much more positive picture as judged through the lenses of the West.

Concluding Remarks: East Wind over West Wind!?

In summary, the current status of development in the Mainland can be seen as a unique example as well as an ingenious mixture of Confucianism, socialism and capitalism. Distinguishing the individual impact of each factor on the others and every aspect of the function of the CCP and the government as well as their international performances is not an easy task due to their closely interwoven nature. This uniqueness à la Chine must account for the magnitude of the population and territory, a long and continuous history as well as the Mainland's humiliation after the Opium Wars and isolation in the 1960's and 1970's. After three decades of political turmoil, China's accomplishments after reforms and the open policy since 1978 have amazed most observers throughout the world. Not only is this sui generis and an oxymoron, but the recent global financial crisis has also made this Chinese model even more prominent.

In general, there are four major sectors of the development of a state, namely the political, economic, cultural and social sectors. Currently, other than the economic development, the other three sectors in the Mainland have lagged behind. Since the implementation of the "socialist market economy" in 1992, there is much more market economy than socialism. Therefore, the gap between the rich and the poor must be reduced with efficient antidotes. Now the Chinese government starts to catch up by implementing political and social reforms as well as cultural constructions.

Nonetheless, the corruption problem remains as the most serious and important issue for the CCP. Without independent anti-corruption authorities, it would be extremely difficult for them to tackle this problem. For the time being the Mainland has to count on the leadership to set examples for others.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to promote civic education to make the citizens and even the peasants more aware of their rights and obligations. This can help stabilize society in the long run. Judging from the PRC's performance in the past decades, there is reason to believe that Beijing is in the position to face the domestic and international challenges in their own way.

As a whole, the value of the West is not to be negated as a whole and it can provide valuable references for China. In view of Confucianism, it is very impolite to lecture people who do not ask for advice, such as the EU and Germany protesting on

Taiwan's death penalty system. Perhaps because European countries have experienced war and dictatorial actions, they insist that the state shall not order death penalty in its country. However, the Taiwanese and Mainland governments have not killed six million Jews or started wars. On the contrary, the Chinese people are all victims rather than perpetrators. Certainly abolishing the death penalty is an option which can be considered in the future, but the people involved shall have the right to decide when and how. More than 80% of the Taiwanese people can not accept the European protest over death penalty and the EU stakeholders should also give this fact consideration.

Meanwhile, the West should be more cautious in judging the Mainland affairs in order to avoid misperceptions and unpleasant consequences. In the past few years, China's implementation of the "socialism with Chinese characteristics" system has indeed been successful in its internal and external affairs. Can this performance justify its superiority to their system? Over the years, most of the Taiwanese can not accept the positive developments on the Mainland. This was indeed normal in the era of the Cold War and confrontation. But time has changed. Isn't it now time to start facing the fact and reality?

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⁴⁰ 滿清從 1842 到 20 世紀初總共賠款折多少人民幣? Manchu From 1842 to early 20th century the Total Indemnity equivalent to RMB, 2010/10/09, <http://blog.udn.com/amlink/4483777>.

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