



Confucian Adaptation and Vitality in the Twenty First Century
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作者: Mary Phillips

The Post-Modern position, with which Confucians can find some compatibility, is that progress and Modernization are not necessarily positive in all respects. Both would cite the last century of war and mass destruction as the product of the advancements of "progress" as the heightened state of the struggle for resources at the expense of indigenous cultures and the environment.¹⁴ The Post Modern argument would be that because Weber wrote in the context of a eurocentric and hegemonic culture his analysis of China is limited to a response to the Western economic drive. The Confucian position would find similarity in Post Modern arguments expressed in Dependency theory which arose as a critique of the mainstream Modernization school by defining the harmful effects of economic expansion resulting from the economic dependency of third world countries.¹⁵ Clearly, Confucians and Dependency theorists would agree with the concerns expressed by de Tocqueville, Bellah, Bell, and Madsen in terms of the ethical/moral problems that face the world due to materialism and consumerism.¹⁶

On the other hand, Confucians would challenge the accusation that tradition works against the institution of economic competition. The success of Premier Deng Xiao Ping's economic genius¹⁷ and President Jiang Zemin's reference to "Chinese traditional characteristics" in a Chinese model that will not follow Western development support the Confucian argument. During what is widely regarded as China's state of post-Communism and progress toward a market economy, substantial Western literature now speculates on China's unique development strategy in terms of structural adjustment and future direction. Now, substantial literature considers the unique historical conditions of mainland China's economy, politics, and ideology, and explores some of the specific problems facing the mainland that were not a consideration for the industrialization of East Asia. The transition to a free market economy in China began to emerge after some of the assumptions of Western classical modernization theory were challenged. The intellectual, political, and economic changes due to technological advances in a Global economy have created a new and different social environment.

Weber made the landmark contribution to social science research by moving cultural values into the causal position in relation to social and economic change. Now, because of the East Asian cases and a broader understanding of the Confucian position, which shines light on the different ways that the two ethical systems (Confucian and Protestant) developed, Weber's model of social change is being reconsidered. We question whether or not his model actually allows for social change in all societies, as he intended.

Confucian Theory of Social Change

Hypothetically, a Confucian theory of social change requires exploration on five levels: 1) China's cultural identity as a unified state structure, 2) how Confucian theory continues to account for social stability on the mainland and abroad, 3) how it allows for the dominance of pragmatic leadership that is not charismatic, but meritocratic, 4) how Confucians would argue that stability comes from harmonic rather than competing states and is strengthened by moral concern for the self and concern for the community, and 5) how it includes a dynamic relationship between ideas and

materialism.

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