

# Political communication in Chinese history: the influence of confucianism on centralized monarchy

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to analyze the influence of Confucianism on the centralized monarchy in Chinese history. This article adopts literature research method and interdisciplinary research method. Confucianism catered to the centralization of the monarchy in Chinese history.

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## 1. Introduction

The Spring and Autumn period was a period in Chinese history from approximately 771 to 476 BCE (or according to some authorities until 403 BCE)[1] which corresponds roughly to the first half of the Eastern Zhou period, many different thinkers appeared. Every thinker goes to persuade the king, hoping that the king will implement the reform and govern the country with his doctrine.[1] Among them, Confucianism represented by Confucius, and Legalists represented by Han Feizi were two famous ideas of that period. At that time, seven countries were in a scuffle. As a small western country, Qin state established a political and military system based on the ideas of the Legalists. Qin state quickly accumulated strength and eventually unified other six states. The Qin Dynasty became the first feudal centralized monarchy in Chinese history. For the first time, all Chinese lands were unified under one powerful ruler. In that same year, King Zheng proclaimed himself the "First Emperor" (始皇帝, Shǐ Huángdì), no longer a king in the old sense and now far surpassing the achievements of the old Zhou Dynasty rulers.[2] The monarchical power is the supreme power in the empire. The emperor monopolizes all the resources in the country; his personality and abilities decide the prosperity of the country. This autocratic system allows for faster decision-making and avoids complex solutions to problems that arise. One disadvantage is that courtiers, who compete for the emperor's favor, are able to amass power for themselves, leading to internal strife.[3] A centralized system has been established since then. However, the Qin Dynasty's legal system was not the rule of law we are talking about today. Qin was not Rechtsstaat. Qin Dynasty's system was more like Police state. The purpose of Qin's establishment of the law was to maintain the centralized power of the feudal monarchs so as to achieve the political purpose of autocracy. A country ruled by law only protects the people from unjust infringement but respects individual freedom; the police state uses the well-being of the people as a reason to violate individual freedom. The power of the Emperor of the Qin Dynasty was unrestricted.

The Legalist School is a school of research on the way of state governance in Chinese history. It proposed the idea of making the country rich and strong and governing the country by law. It is one of the hundred schools of thought, an important school that advocated the legal system as the core idea during the Warring States Period. Legalism is a popular—albeit quite inaccurate—designation of an intellectual current that gained considerable popularity in the latter half of the Warring States period (Zhanguo, 453–221 BCE). Legalists were political realists who sought to attain a “rich state with powerful army” and to ensure domestic stability in an age marked by intense inter- and intra-state competition. They believed that human beings—commoners and elites alike—will forever remain selfish and covetous of riches and fame, and one should not expect them to behave morally. Rather, a viable sociopolitical system should allow individuals to pursue their selfish interests exclusively in ways that benefit the state, viz.[4] But the Legalists also have their shortcomings. For example, the role of law is greatly exaggerated; emphasizing governing the country according to law, “to punish by punishment,” and not paying attention to the role of morality. They believe that human nature is all about pursuing interests, and there are no moral standards at all, so we must use the interests and honor to induce people to do it. For example, in war, if you are successful in combat, you will be given high rewards, including official positions, to motivate soldiers to fight with generals. This raises a problem, that is, a king, if he can give benefits to officials and people, officials and people will support and support him, and at the same time the king is also good at “Power tactics”, then the country is likely to be strong; But if this monarch does not have any of the above, the country is likely to decline or even perish. Therefore, one of the great shortcomings of the Legalist theory lies in its excessive reliance on the individual's ability. But Qin can destroy the six nations and reunify China, and the role of the Legalists should be affirmed, although it has some shortcomings. After entering modern society, the legalist thought is full of a series of factors that are related to fascism, such as restraining freedom of speech, fools and the poor, vigorously safeguarding the monarchy's dictatorship, stressing agriculture and restraining commerce, restricting population movement, and foreign aggression. Yet history was cruel to the Legalists: the Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE), which was designed to rule for “myriad generations” (Shiji 6: 236), collapsed shortly after the founder's death, brought down by a popular rebellion of unprecedented scope and ferocity.[4] This period of China is called a hundred schools of thought. Their respective political ideas developed in different regions. The buds of political communication began to emerge.

Political communication is to serve the centralized monarchy political system. First Emperor of Qin understood this very thoroughly. The reason why First Emperor of Qin chose the legalist thought unifies China. The legalist thought helped him to establish a law that governs his subjects and the people to maintain his central group. Under the political system of legalist ideology, First Emperor of Qin's personal rights were highly concentrated. However, the disadvantages of the legal system in the political system also emerged. On the one hand, due to the high concentration of the emperor's personal power, the interests of the royal family and nobles could not be balanced. This has led to dissatisfaction among various interest groups. On the other hand, due to severe emperor's law, ministers dare not tell the truth. State governance cannot proceed normally. One chengyu (Chinese idiomatic expression) that is derived from an incident involving Zhao Gao is “point to a deer and call it a horse” (指鹿為馬; zhǐlù-wéimǎ) or “calling a deer a horse”, meaning “deliberate peddling of a falsehood”. [5] In order to consolidate the prestige of the Emperor Qin II and eliminate the opponents, the Prime Minister of the Qin Dynasty, Zhao Gao, described the deer as a horse. Even if the ministers knew that it was wrong, they were afraid to tell the truth, because they knew the emperor was testing them. The legal system of legalist ideology imprisoned the people of the Qin Dynasty, restrained freedom of speech, emphasized agriculture but not business, and restricted population movement. In the end, the Qin Dynasty people could not accept the tyranny and the final revolution overthrew the Qin Dynasty. Therefore, the legalist thought helped Qin unify the six kingdoms, but it was also because the legalist thought was too harsh to balance the interests of the aristocracy, and the people had tough life. The Qin Dynasty finally ended the short period during the reign of the second emperor.

After the Qin Dynasty, the rulers of the Han Dynasty began to look for a political thought that can maintain the centralized monarchy, balance various interests, and reduce people's opposition. Confucianism was highly respected by the ruling class during the Han Dynasty. Eventually, Confucianism became the mainstream of Chinese culture, politics and education for more than 2000 years. During the Han Dynasty, political communication reached its peak, and Confucianism was

used in the dissemination of politics, education, culture, and morality. This article will analyze the core propositions and ideas of Confucianism in politics, culture, and education. Thus, answering why the Confucianism can be combined with the centralized political system and used for political communication in Chinese history. The "dismissal of one hundred schools, exclusive respect for Confucianism" proposed by the Han Dynasty can be understood as allowing only one thought. For the Han Dynasty and later Chinese dynasties, they learned from the Qin Dynasty's demise. Confucianism emphasizes strict hierarchical identities in politics, and this ruler supports the political system that maintains the identity of the emperor and consolidates the centralized power. In terms of culture, Confucianism pays more attention to morality and humanity than legalism. This allows the ruler to use the Confucianism to establish a political order that is full of moral standards at the cultural level and allows the people to identify with the concept of "unification, monarchy, and hierarchy" at the cultural level. In terms of education, Confucianism was used as the standard for education in the Han Dynasty and later dynasties. In particular, the examination selection system in the history of China is the "imperial examination system." In other words, those who do not conform to the Confucianism cannot pass the examination of the "Imperial Examination System". The only way for any poor born person to change their destiny is to study Confucianism and become an official through the "Imperial Examination". Officials would select candidates to take part in an examination of the Confucian classics, from which Emperor Wu would select officials to serve by his side.[6] The purpose of becoming an official is to make yourself the master of power. This examination system lasted until the end of the Qing Dynasty.

Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century began to reflect on Confucianism. An "anti-traditional, anti-Confucian, anti-Classic" ideological and cultural revolution and literary revolutionary. It featured scholars such as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Chen Hengzhe, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, He Dong, Qian Xuantong, Liu Bannong, Bing Xin, and Hu Shih, many classically educated, who led a revolt against Confucianism. The movement was launched by the writers of New Youth magazine, where these intellectuals promoted a new society based on unconstrained individuals rather than the traditional Confucian system.[7] It covers the May 4th Movement, a profound cultural and political demonstration movement that took place in Beijing at the beginning of the Republic of China. This movement is called the New Culture Movement. The New Culture Movement was a turning point, which meant that Chinese intellectuals subverted China's centralism, denied their own cultural value, recognized Western culture and democratic republicanism, and moved towards Eurocentricism. New Culture leaders and their followers now saw China as a nation among nations, not as culturally unique.[8] *La Jeunesse* (or New Youth, Chinese: 新青年) was a Chinese magazine in the 1910s and 1920s that played an important role in initiating the New Culture Movement. [9] In 1915, Chen Duxiu published an article in his "New Youth" journal, advocating democracy and science ("Mr. De" and "Mr. Sai"), criticizing traditional and pure Chinese culture, and spreading Marxist ideas; on the one hand, The moderates represented by Hu Shi opposed Marxism, supported the vernacular movement, and advocated pragmatism instead of Confucianism, which was the beginning of a new cultural movement. The significance of the New Culture Movement is that it emancipates the mind, supports freedom of speech, and shakes the dominance of traditional Confucianism. Democracy and science were spread. This article will conclude and find out the influence of Confucianism on centralization in Chinese history.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 3.1. The core theory of Confucianism in politics

Confucianism is not religion. Confucianism is a philosophical method to guide politics, culture, and morals. Confucius did not give an answer on the topic of life and death. Confucius told the students not to think about death when they are alive, but to pay attention to the present life. Confucius is also avoiding a common problem for human beings, where do humans come from and where do they go after death. These Confucian ethicists answered the question of why humans have innate personal worth differently. However, all the answers share a common idea, namely, that humans have a moral potential that enables them to live a moral life.[10] In my opinion, Confucianism itself does not focus on the study of theology. Confucianism is a realistic doctrine of serving politics. Its purpose is to establish a balanced social morality and cultural standards between

the ruler and the people. But whatever Confucianism proposed such as benevolence, loyalty, and filial piety is premised on observing the hierarchy. Confucianism has some expositions about the idea of equality, but this is also a prerequisite to abide by the hierarchy. Therefore, Confucianism does not have the concept of equality and freedom in the true sense, nor does it have the idea of the rule of law to answer where the power of the king comes from. Confucianism is different from universal values. It is also different from Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and democratic thought. The premise of Confucianism's existence is that it serves a centralized monarchy and autocracy.

When we study Confucianism in education, culture, and morality, we will find some common characteristics. Confucian imprisonment of human nature and thought. For example, Confucianism

holds that the wife should be subordinate to the husband, the son to the father, and the minister to the king. Gender inequality has also been a restraint on the human nature and thought of Chinese women for more than 2,000 years. In the *Analects of Confucius*, Confucius said "Only small-minded men and women are hard to deal with, who become bitter if you keep a distance from and become familiar if you get closer to".[11] There is an idiom in China called "Beauties often draw down ruins ", Women have unfortunately become the cause of men's failure many times in Chinese history. On the other hand, Confucianism imprisons people's minds. Confucianism has been the mainstream political ideology admired by monarchs for more than 2,000 years under a centralized system. Starting from a young child to receive Confucian education, memorizing Confucian books and learning Confucianism is the standard for measuring a talent. This limits one's ability to question and critically think, and questioning and criticizing fathers, monarchs, and seniors is immoral in Confucianism. At the same time, education does not attach importance to practical learning, which has also led to the slow development of science and the backwardness of science and technology in modern history in China. But compared with other theories, Confucianism is the most suitable doctrine for the ruling class to continue the authoritarian system of centralized power. Combining the concept of hierarchy with morality is undoubtedly catering to the authoritarian system of centralized monarchy.

One of the core ideas of Confucianism is hierarchical thinking. In Confucianism, it is clearly proposed that human moral standards are based on hierarchy and subordination. In terms of family relations, Confucianism emphasizes that the subordination relationship between the son and his father is the basic foundation of family order. In terms of political relations, Confucianism emphasized that the minister's obedience to the king was the foundation of state governance. Under the influence of the Zhou Dynasty's kinship hierarchy and the "Qinqin Zunzun" mechanism (the purpose of "Qinqin Zunzun" mechanism is to require everyone to abide by the etiquette determined by this principle, to place themselves in a position that does not exceed their own status level, the people are obedient to the king, the officials are to obedient to the king, so that the country will last a long time).[12]

The concept of Confucian kinship emphasizes that the blood-physiological difference between father and son contains the implication of ranks above and below, and this kind of implication is directly related to the implication of monarchy and humility. It has a strong political connotation. For example, in the Confucian classic "The *Analects of Confucius*, Yan Yuan", Confucius advocated "The ruler rules, the minister ministers, the father fathers and the son sons" [11]. The answer of Confucius was to compare the hierarchical relationship between father and son in the family with the relationship between the king and the minister under the background of the patriarchal family relationship. This also merges into "the standard of human morality is also the root of politics".

Another core of Confucianism is benevolence. Benevolence is the core of Confucius thought. Benevolence is Confucius idea of political governance. Confucius argued that the king should treat the people well. Benevolence is the prosperity of the country and the happiness of the people. Mencius was a scholar of Confucianism after Confucius. He proposed "To a state, the people are the most important thing. The state comes second. The ruler is the least important." By the time of Mencius, people-oriented thoughts and benevolence became the political ideas of Confucianism. However, the Confucian people-oriented thought is different from modern democratic thought. Confucian people-oriented thinking, the people in the country are the object of rule, not the master of the country. In western democratic theory, democracy and the rule of law are often linked. This is because democracy is the people's sharing of state sovereignty, and sovereignty is concentrated in



the legislative power. Therefore, the people or the people's representatives form the legislative body of the country and have the legislative power. This is the core meaning of human democracy and the core meaning of democracy. Aristotle was the earliest advocate of the rule of law. He criticized his teacher Plato's idea of the rule of man, and raised the law above the ruler. Aristotle believes that the sovereignty of people (whether the sovereign is a majority, a minority, or a person) must be placed under the sovereignty of the law, and the rulers must control their power according to the law, and use it to monitor and deal with general illegal losses Law people.[13] Because the law has no feelings, is not partial, and is objective and impartial. The core of the rule of law thought elaborated by Aristotle lies in "limitation of power", that is, to limit the power of the ruler. Whether this ruler is all citizens in a democracy, social elites in aristocracy, or monarchs in a monarchy. Because power always has the ambition to expand, it is necessary to use law to reins. Based on the idea of the rule of law, the West has developed a constitutional government system: to restrain the ruler with a "constitution" that reflects the will of the majority of the people, and to achieve restrictions on power through the decentralization of the three powers of legislation, administration, and justice. In the constitutional government system, the constitution has the supremacy and is the fundamental law of the state. All other laws, systems and regulations of the state must be based on the constitution, and it will be abolished if it violates the constitution. It can be seen that in the western theories of democracy and the rule of law, the will of the people is the foundation of the entire legal system.[13] Therefore, the law is the embodiment of the will of the people, not the embodiment of the will of the monarch, the "law of the people" and not the "law of the monarch".

The emergence and development of western democratic systems can also reflect that law is the embodiment of the will of the people, not the embodiment of the will of the monarch. The western democracy that originated in the ancient Greek city-state of Athens incorporated citizen participation into the legislative and law enforcement process in its original design. The 500-member council is a permanent democratic deliberative body in the ancient Greek democratic system, and it is also the most important legislative organ. Its members have a certain term and are decided by lot of all citizens.[13] According to this design, all citizens have the opportunity to participate in the discussion and formulation of national laws. In addition, in the field of law enforcement, the court has a jury composed of ordinary citizens, and the members of the jury are also decided by citizens. Therefore, in the field of law enforcement, citizens can also participate. These core designs in the ancient Greek democracy were inherited by modern western democratic systems. The 500-member council has evolved into a parliament in today's democratic system, and the citizen jury is still an important part of the judicial system. The only difference is that the ancient lottery democracy has been replaced by representative elections. Even so, in modern democracy, citizens can still share the state's ruling power by participating in the election and participate in the formulation and implementation of national laws. Therefore, in modern democratic systems, national law is still "the law of the people" rather than "the law of monarchs".

From the above comparison, in the Confucian people-oriented thought, although the "law of the world" is a law formulated to promote the interests of ordinary people from the perspective of "the people", it is still a law formulated by the monarch. The people do not have Participate in the formulation and implementation of laws. This is determined by the status of "people" in the Confucian people-oriented thought. The people are not the masters of the country, so they have no right to stipulate the order of the country. The "law of the world" is the "law of the monarch" and not the "law of the people".

So to summarize the above. The political core of Confucianism is divided into two. The inherent political ideology of Confucianism is a monarchy with the premise of a hierarchical system, which serves the needs of authoritarian investors. On the other hand, there is no idea of equality under the hierarchy. Of course, the law is also made by the monarch. The law does not restrict the actions of the monarch. The external manifestation of Confucianism is benevolence, and benevolence's thought helps the ancient Chinese society to establish orderly and harmonious values in terms of morality and culture. In a certain sense, the contradiction between people and the monarch is alleviated. Confucian political thought has become the most effective ideological weapon for monarchs to achieve and maintain a centralized monarchy.

## 2.1. Combination of Confucianism and the centralized monarchy system

During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, thinkers of various states put forward their own strategic guidelines, and the Legalists flourished. Various countries have begun reforms of legalists. In the Han dynasty after the Qin Dynasty, the thoughts of various schools before the Warring States Period gradually recovered, especially the Confucian and Taoist schools. At the beginning of the Han Dynasty, the monarchs mainly pursued the Taoist thought of “rest with the people and do nothing by doing”. But after the emperor resolved the chaos of the Seven Kingdoms, the authority of the central government of the Han Dynasty was unprecedentedly strong. In order to consolidate his position, the emperor urgently needed a unified ideological standard. But with the development of the country, by the time of Emperor Wu, complete and profound philosophical thoughts were increasingly needed to maintain the authority of the regime. Because scholars at that time still had different theories, there was no unified thought. After Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty ascended the throne, Wei Wei, Tian Yi, and Dou Ying advocated respect for Confucianism, degraded the Legalist, and started a political struggle with the Empress Dou. In the sixth year of the Jianyuan period (135 BC), Empress Dou died, and officials supporting Confucianism gained power again.

The Han Dynasty's unification of political thought with Confucianism is called “dismissing a hundred schools and respecting Confucianism alone”. Since then, Confucianism has been combined with centralization in China's history. The reason for the combination of Confucianism and the centralized system is that Confucianism has played an important role in consolidating feudal rule and maintaining national unity. Feudal rulers implemented ignorant policies in order to control people's thoughts, which hindered the progress of social productivity and science and technology. It had a negative impact on historical development. However, in the Confucianism, the diligence and love of the people, the meritocracy, the harmonious coexistence, the benevolence-based ethics, and the reasonable education methods have positive significance.

From the timeline of Confucian ideology and political development in Chinese history. In the late Spring and Autumn Period, Confucius founded Confucianism. The core was “benevolent” love. He advocated the use of love to mediate and harmonious social interpersonal relationships. He advocated the “hierarchical system” and the status of human beings. Confucius opposed arbitrary killings of the people by the criminal law. Confucius demanded that his rulers care for the people and gain their trust. Therefore, Confucius's benevolent thought is the core moral code, which is conducive to mediating interpersonal relationships and alleviating social contradictions. During the Warring States Period, Mencius developed Confucius's people-oriented thinking, and put forward that the people are the most important and the monarch is secondary. Mencius advocates “benevolent government”, which includes reducing penalties and taxes, so that farmers can own a small amount of land.

Dong Zhongshu was a Han Dynasty Chinese philosopher, politician, and writer. He is traditionally associated with the promotion of Confucianism as the official ideology of the Chinese imperial state. He apparently favored heaven worship over the tradition of cults celebrating the five elements.[14] The Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu in the Han Dynasty absorbed the advantages of legalism and Taoism. He combined the needs of the centralized system and the monarchy. He upgraded Confucianism. He preached the ideology of “Monarchical Power” and “Great Unity”. He put forward the suggestion of “dismissing a hundred schools and respecting Confucianism alone” and was adopted by Emperor Wu. In the end, Confucianism became the orthodox thought of the centralized autocracy.

After the “Anshi Rebellion” in the Tang Dynasty, the orthodox status of Confucianism was weakened. During the Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi reformed Confucianism, absorbed certain ideas of Buddhism and Taoism, and formed new Confucianism. Confucianism proposes “Making the course of nature existent and the desire of human extinct”, which is actually a defense of the feudal hierarchy. Some scholars have criticized this as imprisoning people's freedom and humanity.

In the Ming Dynasty, the ruler established the eight-part essay examination system in order to strictly control the minds of scholars. This examination system stipulated that the examination papers only set propositions from Confucian classics and did not allow the use of personal opinions. This strengthened the status of Confucianism unprecedentedly. This also limits the free thinking of intellectuals.

At the end of the 19th century, Kang Youwei wrote “Confucius Reform System Examination” and “New Theory”. He combined western capitalist political doctrine with Confucianism. He emphasized changing the system, seeking theoretical basis for the reform and reform, and gave Confucianism Content.

In the New Cultural Movement of the Republic of China, scholars such as Chen Duxiu directly criticized Confucianism and put forward the slogan “Down with Confucius”. They advocated new morals and opposed old morals. They compared the feudal etiquette and ethics maintained by Confucianism “Eating man devil”. The New Culture Movement shook the dominance of feudal orthodoxy, represented by Confucianism, and promoted the development of democracy and scientific thinking. The New Culture Movement is the first time in Chinese history to develop western democratic and scientific ideological emancipation movements. The New Culture Movement also directly criticized Confucianism and the centralized autocracy. But the dominance of Confucianism in Chinese society has not fundamentally changed.

In the early days, Confucianism was intended to restore the courtesy of the Zhou Dynasty, and to achieve a political balance between central and local power. The centralized system and the system of the emperor's monopoly power were not the early political ideas of Confucianism. The concept of golden mean (Zhong Yong), i.e. moderation, is the highest principle of moral cultivation in Confucianism. It entails an exclusive methodology in addressing politics, philosophy and everything in the universe.[15] “The Golden Mean” means the balance pursued by Confucianism. Power needs to be balanced, and the relationship between people needs to be balanced. The reason why Confucianism finally became the orthodox thought admired by the monarchy and centralized system. Another reason is the ruling class in ancient China needed Confucianism as the legitimacy of the outer packaging authority, but the rulers actually managed the people with strict monarchy laws. The legitimacy (authority) of rule was an issue that ancient Chinese emperors had always been concerned about. Why did future emperors add Confucian content instead of directly using strict legalist ideas? Here we talk about the legitimacy (authority) of the rule. Legal scholars did not solve this problem, but Han scholars solved it. First, the definition of authority can be most simply defined as “rightful authority”. Power is the ability to influence the actions of others, and authority is the right to exert this influence. A brief summary is voluntary obedience (identification) to a right. Before that, China's authority came from blood. Its order was the clan patriarchal system and from the emperor's ascension to the end of the Warring States Period, the Western Zhou Dynasty was completed. “Ritual collapse of Zhou Dynasty” is already a sign that blood authority has gone downhill. The legitimacy of the regime comes from authority. This is also a major reason for the death of Qin II. The Legalist thought overemphasized the hegemony based on violence. The so-called hegemony is a form of self-authorization. The main method of self-sustainment is to use violence unrestricted internally and externally. The “conception of the ruler's role as a supreme arbiter, who keeps the essential power firmly in his grasp” while leaving details to ministers, would have a “deep influence on the theory and practice of Chinese monarchy”.[16]

This hegemony is not recognized, so First Emperor of Qin will produce a kind of “legality anxiety”, First Emperor of Qin always wanted to establish authority for himself, but all failed. With violent authority overwhelming the crowd without establishing authority. In the end, the legalist system of the Qin Dynasty triggered the people's uprisings. The Chen Sheng and Wu Guang Uprising (simplified Chinese: 陈胜吴广起义; traditional Chinese: 陳勝吳廣起義; pinyin: Chén Shèng Wú Guāng Qǐyì), July-December 209 B.C.[17][18] Therefore, the legalist thought did not establish a legitimacy for the regime. However, the Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu of the Han Dynasty solved this problem, and the solution was also a few words “Interactions Between Heaven and Mankind”. Since Dong Zhongshu, the monarchy has become an authority recognized by people, and the monarch's legitimacy originates from heaven. Of course, Confucianism also emphasizes the cultivation of the character of kings. If the monarch is bad in character, the new regime can replace the old regime with providence. From the Han Dynasty to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the legitimacy of Chinese regimes all originated from “destiny”, so the theory of Confucianism cannot be lost to the emperor, because Confucian ideas can help the emperor to establish authority and legitimacy of political power. Of course, the state's management model can completely formulate the emperor's law to rule the people based on legalist ideas.

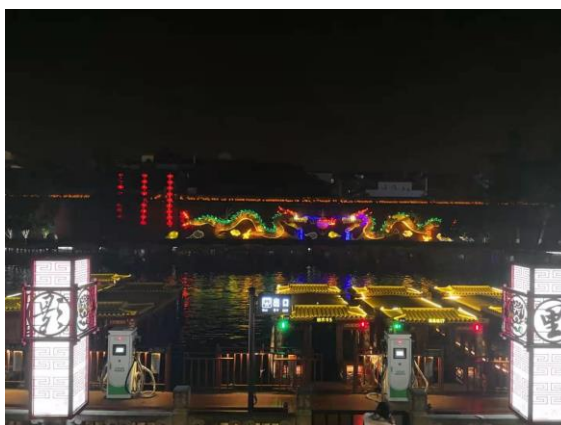
So from the above, the reason why Confucianism can be combined with the centralized monarchy. The main reason is that Confucianism met the needs of ancient Chinese rulers. On the one hand, Confucianism helped rulers unify their thinking and establish a unified thinking. On the other hand, Confucianism holds that the authority of the emperor originates from heaven. This idea helped the emperor establish political legitimacy and authority. Therefore, whether Confucianism can help a country develop its economy and improve productivity is not the most important. Confucianism can help rulers maintain their dominant position.

### 3. Method

This research is library research. There are several definitions of this literature research. Mirzaqon. T and Purwoko suggest several purposes of library research from several experts, namely: 1. Library research is a study used in collecting information and data with the help of various materials in the library such as documents, books, magazines, stories historical stories, etc. 2. Literature research is a study that studies various reference books and the results of similar previous research, which are useful for obtaining a theoretical basis for the problem to be researched (Sarwono: 2006). 3. Library research is a data collection technique by conducting a review of books, literature, notes, and various reports related to the problem to be solved (Nazir: 1988). 4. Literature research is a theoretical study, references, and other scientific literature about culture, values, and norms that develop in the social situation under investigation. Meanwhile, Khatibah suggests library research as an activity carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using specific methods/techniques to find answers to problems faced through library research. Meanwhile, Danandjaja argues that library research is a systematic scientific bibliographic method of analysis, including collecting bibliographic materials related to the research objectives, collection techniques with the literature method, and organizing and presenting data. Therefore, library research is a research activity carried out by collecting information and data with various library materials such as reference books, similar results of the previous study, articles, notes, and multiple journals related to the problem. Activities are carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using specific methods/techniques to find answers to the issues.

### 4. Results and Discussion

At the beginning of the 20th century, Chinese scholars began to reflect on the influence of Confucianism on China's political communication. They believe that Confucianism has influenced education and thinking. The Confucius Temple in Nanjing today was built in the third year of Xiankang in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (337). From that time, students had the custom of worshipping Confucius. They hope to get the blessing of Confucius to pass the exam and serve the emperor. Confucian theory has also become the foundation of the most mainstream Chinese education, culture and values.



**Fig. 1.** Nanjing Confucius Temple Scenic Area Picture.

<sup>a</sup> The photo comes from the author, taken on December 16, 2018.

From the Opium War of 1840 to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and finally the Revolution of 1911. China's military, economy, and science lag completely behind the West, and modern Chinese



intellectuals have begun to reflect on the shortcomings of Confucianism and the monarchy of the Central Group. Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century began to reflect on Confucianism. Arising out of disillusionment with traditional Chinese culture following the failure of the Republic of China to address China's problems.[19] It covers the May 4th Movement, a profound cultural and political demonstration movement that took place in Beijing at the beginning of the Republic of China. This movement is called the New Culture Movement. The New Culture Movement was a turning point, which meant that Chinese intellectuals subverted China's centralism, denied their own cultural value, recognized Western culture and democratic republicanism, and moved towards Eurocentricism.[20] In 1915, Chen Duxiu published an article in his "New Youth" journal, advocating democracy and science ("Mr. De" and "Mr. Sai"), criticizing traditional and pure Chinese culture, and spreading Marxist ideas. On the one hand, The moderates represented by Hu Shi opposed Marxism, supported the vernacular movement, and advocated pragmatism instead of Confucianism, which was the beginning of a new cultural movement. The significance of the New Culture Movement is that it emancipates the mind, supports freedom of speech, and shakes the dominance of traditional Confucianism. Democracy and science were spread. There are several factors for the failure of the "New Culture Movement".

*1) the excessive anti-tradition of the New Culture Movement.*

The core slogan of the May 4th Enlightenment was "Revaluation of All Values". The so-called "Revaluation of All Values" was nothing more than a pretext for rebelling against the old order and "throwing down Confucius". New cultural people have a fierce resistance to traditional culture and oppose all the old systems and Confucianism. Some scholars believe that Chen Duxiu is the organizer of the New Culture Movement and the destroyer of traditional culture. His slogan is: "Destruction! Destruction of idols! Destruction of false idols!" He not only violently criticized all the ethics of the old times, but also "Confucianism" and a rebel against traditional Confucian ethics. In addition, Liang Qichao also pointed out the main contradictions of China's reforms to the criticism of the old culture. He believed that the first step in China's modernization should start with culture, and clearly issued "the new citizen is the first urgent task of China today". This new call for historical change. The key to educating and cultivating new citizens is to make the new culture take root in people's thinking. However, at this time, Chinese society and culture still have difficulty breaking through traditional cultural thinking. Liang Qichao believes that only in a determined manner can people's culture and thinking be changed, thus showing a radical tendency in cultural criticism. At that time, Darwin's "evolution theory" had just been introduced to China, and the development of everything was a matter of choice. This mainstream view happened to provide theoretical support for Liang Qichao's idea. The two pioneers of the New Culture Movement agreed that in order to bring the minds of the people back to the development trend of world history, they must be achieved through the determination of isolation from all the old cultures. Some scholars believe that the two of them have indeed seen the problem of the staleness of the people in Chinese society, and they have also tried to find ways to solve the problem. But they ignored the new problems.

With the in-depth development of the new cultural movement, "New Youth" intensified the attack on Confucianism. Qian Xuan shouted with a loud voice to abolish Confucianism and Chinese characters. Fu Sinian also enthusiastically requested to replace Chinese with European languages. Because the pioneers of the New Culture Movement were eager to break through all the constraints that are different from the advanced Western cultural concepts, and eager to bring China into the leading trend of world development, they ignored some beneficial factors in traditional culture and adopted excessive anti-tradition. The method of forcibly bringing China's development trajectory to the advanced western society has caused a certain degree of obstacles to the growth of Chinese culture in the future. Another objective factor is the large number of Chinese farmers. Most people have no foundation in education and cannot understand what democracy is and what science is in the New Culture Movement. This factor is also the basis of many new political forces, and people without independent thinking are the easiest to convince.

*2) Insufficient democracy and science*

The slogans "Democracy" and "Science" are the banner of the New Culture Movement. However, under the influence of historical limitations, these two demands did not integrate the actual situation in China. What's more, the original slogan Chen Duxiu did not have a systematic

theory of democracy. Some scholars believe that Chen Duxi's democratic thoughts come from a complicated source. He generally absorbed the human rights thoughts of the French Revolution era and 19th-century British liberalism. He has both social Darwinism and socialism. Of course, he also incorporated his own knowledge of the times Thinking.[21] In Chen Duxiu's theory of democracy, he denied the close connection between democracy and politics. In his article "Constitution and Confucianism", he proposed the idea of "ethical revolution".[22] Chen Duxiu believes that the goal of the new cultural movement can only be achieved if China completely overthrows Confucianism and establishes the ethics of the advanced bourgeoisie in the West.

For a long time, Confucian ethics have been criticized as the core factor of authoritarian system. In fact, many scholars believe that the Chinese legalist thought is the fundamental source of autocratic system, which is similar to the concept of police state. Some scholars believe that Confucianism with "benevolent" as its core still contains elements of democracy, but also develops and evolves the people-based thinking. However, as far as legalist thought is concerned, it can be said to be total autocratic slavery. It attempts to subject the people to the emperor through the constraints of rules and regulations in order to maintain an autocratic rule with a very strong authority without taking into account the interests of the people. Looking back on a century of revolutionary history, many people believe that political revolution is the only way to fundamentally solve China's problems. They struggled for it or even sacrificed their lives. In 1898, the political reforms of the bourgeoisie preached by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao appeared to be efforts for Chinese democracy, but at that time they were still premised on maintaining the rule of the Qing emperor. They were loyal to the emperor, and in order to understand how to save the autocratic feudal monarch, they finally failed. The Revolution of 1911 set off the first shot of the Chinese democratic revolution. In order to realize their political ideals, the revolutionaries overthrew the feudal monarchy of the Qing Dynasty and established a bourgeois democratic government. Eventually, the concept of democratic republic was spread in society and among the people.

The "science" in another slogan of new cultural movement. The Chinese translation of the theory of evolution, which has long been highly respected by Liang Qichao, was published in 1898, and once published, it swept the country. Because it fits the aspirations of the times that demanded social change. However, as the author of the translation, Yan Fu did not actually restore Thomas Henry Huxley's original work. In fact, the content expressed in the book is more mixed with some of his own opinions on the "Evolution and Ethic". For example, in the original work, it is mentioned that the evolution of nature is different from the improvement of horticulture. When mentioning evolution, it is often accompanied by pauses, degradation, reincarnation, etc. These actually mean that the theory of evolution is limited, but these texts have been omitted.[23] Hu Shi's concluding remarks after the "contest between science and outlook on life" are sufficient evidence of the aura of "Mr. Sai". At the time, "in the past 30 years, a noun has almost achieved the status of supreme dignity in the country, regardless of understanding and those who do not understand, no matter the old and the reformed, dare not show scorn or insult to it and the term is 'science'".[24] It can be seen from this that the pioneers of the New Culture Movement Science has esteemed itself to a position of esteem. Any belief should not be respected unless it is scientifically proven. The scientific method is the only way to reach the truth. During this period, science has undertaken the important mission of national rejuvenation and national prosperity.

However, this atmosphere of advocating the supremacy of science has largely undermined the growth of humanism in Chinese society. Chen Duxiu wanted to use the amulet "science" to publicize his own thoughts, so that he could realize his personal cult of worship, but run counter to the true scientific spirit.

### *3) Adopt a formalistic approach and simple "bringing doctrine"*

Introduction of foreign literature is an important way for the pioneers of the New Culture Movement to reform and innovate Chinese literature. Mr. Lu Xun is in favor of "bringing doctrine" and bringing over the excellent foreign cultures. Lu Xun opposed the servility culture and authoritarian system of Confucianism. The opposite of autocrats is slaves, who do everything when they are in power, and become servile when they lose power.[25] However, the pioneers of the New Culture Movement did not discriminate and analyze the eastern and western cultures calmly and meticulously. There was a one-way orientation of thinking, which led to a one-dimensional value. They believed that all western imported goods must surpass the inherent Tradition. This has caused

most of the pioneers of the New Culture Movement to have a sense of eagerness and quick success. They believe that as long as they learn about democracy and freedom in the West or introduce Western Marxism, China's problems will be solved. The ideological understanding of freedom and democracy is not very thorough, and the understanding of Marxism is also a dogma. The failure to combine Marxism with the specific practice of the Chinese revolution has brought a very negative impact on the subsequent Chinese revolution.[26] Moreover, there is no dialectical approach to Western culture, and Westernization is mistaken for modernization. It is believed that in order to achieve modernization, China must follow the path of Westernization. Obviously, after simply drawing on historical experience, he was anxious to bring China into the road of modernization and ignored the actual conditions of China. He mistakenly believed that as long as the Westernization is taken, China can become a democracy and a science country like the European and American countries. World power.

#### *4) The New Culture Movement failed to infect the majority of the people at the bottom*

The influence of the New Culture Movement was mainly intellectual elites and large and medium cities, which did not extend to the bottom of society and the vast rural areas, thereby reducing the social influence of the New Culture Movement. "In fact, when the New Culture Movement was underway, intellectuals had realized that the popularization of the New Culture Movement should be expanded to benefit more citizens, especially workers and peasants at the bottom of society. Some efforts have also been made in the promotion of vernacular texts and the creation of new publications, but the development has been uneven and the results are not obvious".[27] For example, the hometown of writer Sha Ting, a county, Sichuan Province, reached the late stage of the New Culture Movement in 1921. However, Sha Ting has never known such pioneers as Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi. It can be seen that the influence of the new culture at the bottom of society and in the vast countryside is limited. Mao Zedong clearly saw the shortcoming of the New Culture Movement, that is, the civilians as the core role in the "civilian literature" advocated by the intellectuals at that time did not refer to ordinary people, but in fact the targets were still assets such as landowners. class. Because of this, the Communist Party of China advocates that intellectuals go deep into the workers and peasants, and that socialist thinking is combined with workers and peasants. Proponents of the New Culture Movement were fiercely anti-traditional and anti-feudal, but not radical. The people who want to rely on the new culture to reform the old China are just a few intellectuals. They can't really awaken the vast majority of the people.

#### *5) Reflections on the New Culture Movement*

The New Culture Movement has now been over a hundred years. It can be said that we can now take a more rational view of this cultural enlightenment from an objective standpoint. As some intellectuals and social elites have personally experienced the benefits of Western civilization, they can't wait to advocate breaking all old cultures. Chen Duxiu said: "Ethical thinking affects politics. Confucianism is the root of China's political system, and Confucianism maintains the class system".[28] As far as Chen Duxiu is concerned, the source of his democratic thoughts is complicated. He basically absorbed the natural human rights thoughts during the French Revolution and 19th-century British liberalism, with both social Darwinism and socialism.[21] In his view, the essence of Chinese feudal ethical morality is to divide people's ranks, inequality. Modern Western civilization advocates the spirit of individualism of freedom, equality, and independence. The two are essentially different. The ideology advocated by Confucian ethics is the most harmful. This is actually the "democracy" shouted by the New Culture Movement. The slogan is the same. The dissemination of the idea of breaking the feudal outline has actually provided an important cultural basis for the realization of democracy in China.

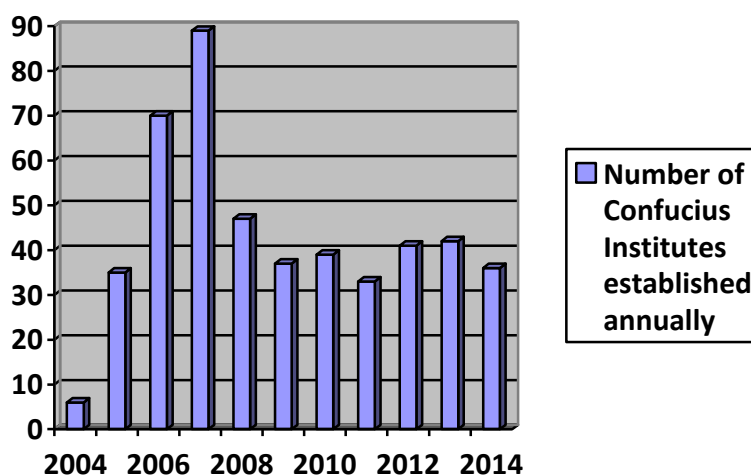
Everyone in the country understands democracy and talks about democracy, even if it is superficial and does not know its meaning, but it is being passed on. An atmosphere of anti-feudal ethics has gradually formed. The true realization of democracy cannot be achieved in a short time, but fortunately because of the traditional morals of the public against Confucianism, political ambitionists cannot use the people's superstition of feudalism to achieve their own with political ambitions, history can no longer go back to feudal society. Therefore, if New Cultural Movement has not been so resolute in criticizing traditional morals, and I am afraid that the ideal of democracy cannot take root in Chinese soil. Secondly, standing at the current point of time to look at this cultural enlightenment movement, I had to be in the perspective of history. Looking back at the

Chinese society 100 years ago, the people have just woke up from the feudal ideology and culture that had been indulged for two thousand years. The bourgeoisie and intellectuals in the upper class hated traditional culture and traditional thinking, and for a time failed to completely distinguish clearly the part of Confucianism that is beneficial to social development from the part that runs counter to the trend of historical development. There are also deficiencies in scientific understanding, especially in the translation of foreign language works.

The translation of the theory of evolution, which has always been highly respected by Liang Qichao, was published in 1898 and became popular throughout the country once it was published. Because it fits the aspirations of the times that required social change at that time. However, as the author of the translation, Yan Fu did not actually restore Huxley's original work. In fact, the content expressed in the book is more mixed with some of his own views on "Tian Yan". For example, the original work mentions that natural evolution is not the same as gardening improvement. When it comes to evolution, it is often accompanied by pauses, degradation, reincarnation, etc. These facts all mean the theoretical limitation of evolution, but these words have been omitted by Yan Fu [23]. Another factor is that the New Culture Movement did not integrate China's national conditions. In fact, the pioneers did not have a thorough understanding of Western freedom and democracy. They also understood Marxism as a dogma, and did not integrate Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution [26]. Therefore, the rise of the New Culture Movement originated from intellectuals who received advanced education. However, most of the people at that time were still greatly influenced by Confucian education and values. This is also one of the reasons for the failure of the New Culture Movement. In addition, the society at that time lacked the spirit of individual independence. Hu Shi called this spirit "the true spirit of sound individualism" [29].

So when the individual transforms the forecast independently, this will translate into a new value. That is, it emphasizes personality independence and personal freedom. When individual independence is not established, society will not form an understanding of human rights. However, for the Chinese influenced by Confucianism, it is difficult to change the patriarchal system at that period, and children still have to be restrained by their parents. Many intellectuals believed that the prerequisite for promoting democracy was human rights and individual independence. At that time, the people preferred to use the term human rights rather than democracy. Although the May Fourth Movement did find partial success in removing traditional Chinese culture [30], the May Fourth Movement ultimately failed to allow the Chinese to establish independent thinking and awareness of human rights.

Even in China today, Confucius still plays an important role in China's cultural value. Established in 2004 (see fig 2), the Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution established by Sino-foreign cooperation, dedicated to learning Chinese and enhancing their understanding of Chinese culture. Judging from the growing number of Confucius Institutes around the world, Confucius still has a profound influence on Chinese language, education and culture.





**Fig. 2.** Number of Confucius Institutes established in 2004-2014<sup>c</sup> Source: <http://qks.cqu.edu.cn/html/cqdxskcn/2015/6/201506030.htm>

## 5. Conclusion

Political communication in Chinese history has experienced a hundred schools of thought during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period. Finally, Confucianism was spread vigorously in the Han Dynasty. Since then, Confucianism has become the political communication theory of Chinese rulers in all dynasties. Confucianism and the centralized monarchy in China's history for more than two thousand years have profoundly affected the development of China's political system and the thinking of the people. To study the influence of Confucianism on Chinese politics, we need to distinguish between positive and negative factors of Confucianism. Confucianism provides many progressive ideas in forming Chinese culture and morals, such as benevolence, friendliness, and loyalty. However, the negative influence of Confucianism on the education of the Chinese government and people should be analyzed objectively. The reason why Confucianism can be a theory advocated by the ancient Chinese ruling class includes several aspects. First, the ruling class hopes to unify the thinking of all classes through Confucianism. Eliminate different ideas and consolidate government. Secondly, the ruling class establishes the legitimacy and authority of the regime through the Confucian "monarchy". Third, the balance theory of Confucianism in "kindness" can help the ruling class and the people to achieve the purpose of reducing contradictions and conflicts. In short, Confucianism is an ideological tool used by ancient Chinese ruling classes to consolidate the centralized system and strengthen the emperor's personal power.

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