

Research on the Relationship Between Cultural Thought in the Late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China and China's Modernization Process

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Abstract: The Chinese culture during the Qing dynasty was drawn from Confucian cultural beliefs and political ideals in the society. The Republic of China was born in 1912 and was heavily influenced by the West revolutionary, Sun Yat-Sen who acted and controlled the Xinhai Revolution in 1911. The present study seeks to examine the relationship between cultural thought in the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China and China's modernization process. We conducted a historical analysis of key events, figures and historical texts from documents and publications about the history of analysis. Thematic, ideational, and discourse analyses were performed. The findings showed that during the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, China's approach to modernization was a complex interplay between tradition and Western influence. Intellectual movements and reform efforts reflected this tension. Early on, the Self-Strengthening Movement focused on acquiring Western military technology to address immediate national security concerns. However, this approach proved limited in achieving broader societal and economic progress. The modernisation process in China involves a complex pattern of relationship between modernity and traditional cultures.

Keywords: Modernisation, China, Qing Dynasty, Cultural Values and Historical Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Qing dynasty was the last imperial dynasty in China (1644-1911) in which the Chinese territories grew by three times its size compared to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) with a significant growth in the population from 150 million to 450 million people (Perdue, 2016). The constant growth and expansion under the Qing dynasty led to the Sinicization of several people and integration into the national system. The Qing dynasty was largely controlled by the Manchus under the Manchuria regime (present Northeastern China). The Manchurian regime had significant effects on the Chinese culture from the onset of their rule and their culture was gradually assimilated into the Chinese culture and fundamentally based on conservative ideologies of Confucianism (Fang, 2019).

Several philosophers and scholars who emerged after Confucius were controlled by his assumptions (Yu, 2023). For instance, Mozi postulated that the Universal concept of love was merely an extension of the Confucian ideals of humanity and the “worthy man” was regarded as an ideal leader. The Chinese culture during the Qing dynasty was drawn from Confucian cultural beliefs and political ideals in the society. This period was mainly characterised by collection, catalogues and comments of the past traditions (Johnson et al., 2023). The Chinese society experienced a decline in the decorative and painting arts due to the increase in the number of repetitive designs. However, other crafts such as jade carvings were consistently promoted and achieved high levels. Most of the traditional architectural elements were maintained with ornaments and two major forms of painting and porcelain dominated the visual forms of arts. Zheng (2019) highlighted that the rise of Chinese nationalism is closely linked to the concepts of the Chinese nation where it has close links with the universality and identification of all ethnic groups as one people. Modern Chinese nationalism constitutes the period between the late Qing dynasty and the Peoples Republic of China (Yarahmadian et al., 2022).

Mei (2019) postulated that the during the late stages of the Qing dynasty, there was a cultural conservative trend that formed the basis of social thought processes. The conservatism was deemed to have emanated from the Western theories in the 1960s. However, the major source of the cultural conservatism in China is believed to be from Contemporary Neo-Confucianism and these thoughts have had direct effects on the cultural basis and trends of modern China. Cultural conservatism does not imply the derogatory perspective of backwardness, lack of innovation and progress; however, it implies “cultural preservation” which means to persist and defend the elements of traditional culture. Thus, cultural conservatives have expressed strong opinions about preserving the dominant forms of Chinese culture such as traditional Chinese medicine while taking into account the material aspects of Western civilisation.

The views of the Taiping rebellion from their thoughts and policies were a reflection on the denial of the ideals of Confucianism and its culture (Donovan, 2023). However, according to Zeng Guofan, suppressing the Taiping rebellion was considered as a saviour and the “guardian angel” of this time because there were significant challenges in the culture of Confucianism and rampant corruption that disregarded the morality of the law. At this point in time, Confucianism could not offer a practical basis for the cultural crisis in China. The second Opium Wars came at a time when the Chinese culture grounded on Confucianism was in crisis due to

the internal wrangles and the emergence of the Western civilisation as a major external cause led to distinct levels of cultural identity among the Chinese.

The modern China began from the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 after the Anglo-Chinese war (1840-1842). According to Max Weber (1864-1920) he postulated that before the Opium Wars (Anglo-Chinese wars), China was viewed as a traditional society with similarities to the pre-capitalism in the West (Rui, 2022). Max Weber believed that China was stagnating and had difficulties of transitioning into modernity until the emergence of transformative shocks from the external world. In the 1950's and 1960's the emergence of American sinologists such as John Fairbank (1907-1991) suggested that the views of Max Weber on China were actually linked to the theoretical basis of modernisation (Chen, 2015). In contrast to the views of Max Weber of the West and the Rest, the views of John Fairbank appreciated the Chinese uniqueness in terms of their cultural thoughts and political achievements with a minimal focus on ethnocentricity.

The Republic of China was born in 1912 and was heavily influenced by the West revolutionary, Sun Yat-Sen who acted and controlled the Xinhai Revolution in 1911 before transitioning into the Wuchang uprising with more than 15 provinces declaring independence from the Qing dynasty (Ergenc, 2005; Palm, 2014). The communist party of China was formed in 1921 with its traces to the May Fourth Movement aligned with protesting the Chinese government response to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. In 1966 under the Chairman Mao Zedong, cultural revolution in China was not heavily witnessed by a greater percentage of individuals who resided in the rural areas; however, its consequences and outcomes affected the entire Chinese system (Thornton, 2019). Mao sought to eliminate capitalism and traditional Chinese practices and replace them with the philosophy of Maoism and ideologies. There were closure of schools and all Chinese youths were required to actively participate in the change process which had adverse outcomes such as Youth gangs (Red Guards), martial law, over 2 million deaths and purges in the communist party (Narikbayeva et al., 2023). In the later stages of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) and the emergence of the Republic of China (1912-1949) was accompanied by great upheaval and changes for the Chinese due to the dominance of the West and internal instabilities. China has faced significant challenges in the process of modernisation as a result of focusing on new emerging ideas, technology and the existing components of the traditional cultures. Our rationale is to explore the process of modernisation in China from the late

Qing dynasty to the modern China and expound on the existing literature examining the Chinese path to modernisation. Thus, our main objective is to research on the relationship between cultural thought in the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China and China's modernization process.

2. METHODS

2.1 Study Design and Sources of Information

Our study was based on historical and comparative analysis of modernisation in China and the West. Historical analyses were focused on archival research through primary sources of information such as documents, letters and intellectual writings from the period of the late Qing dynasty to the Republic of China.

2.2 Historical Analyses

Our study (see Figure 1) relied on archival research to understand China's path to modernization involving primary sources of information such as documents, or letters such as the cultural revolution (1966-1976) of the Little Red Book, Wall Posters, Red Guard Publications, Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), May Fourth Movement (1919) and the Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956-1957). These materials were housed in libraries, archives, and historical societies, offered a direct window into the thoughts and anxieties of the time. Textual analysis was then applied to these documents to uncover the dominant cultural values, identify emerging critiques of the status quo, and even unearth proposed solutions to the immense challenges China faced in its modernization efforts.

We carried out biographical analyses involving the key figures and individuals who shaped it and the ideological currents that swirled around cultural thoughts such as Kang Youwei (1858-1927), Liang Qichao (1873-1929), Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and others. The analysis involved understanding Mao's revolutionary ideology, his disillusionment with the Soviet model, his pronouncements and speeches, such as the "*May 7th Directive*" (1966) which launched the movement and his anxieties about maintaining revolutionary fervour were crucial to comprehending the motivations behind the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, the works of reformers such as Youwei's "*Confucianism as a Progressive Religion*" (1888) and Liang Qichao's "*New Learning*" (1898), revealed their belief that China needed to adopt Western scientific, political, and social institutions to achieve national strength. Ideational analyses were conducted based on the

intellectual thoughts of self-strengthening against Westernisation and Confucianism against modernity.

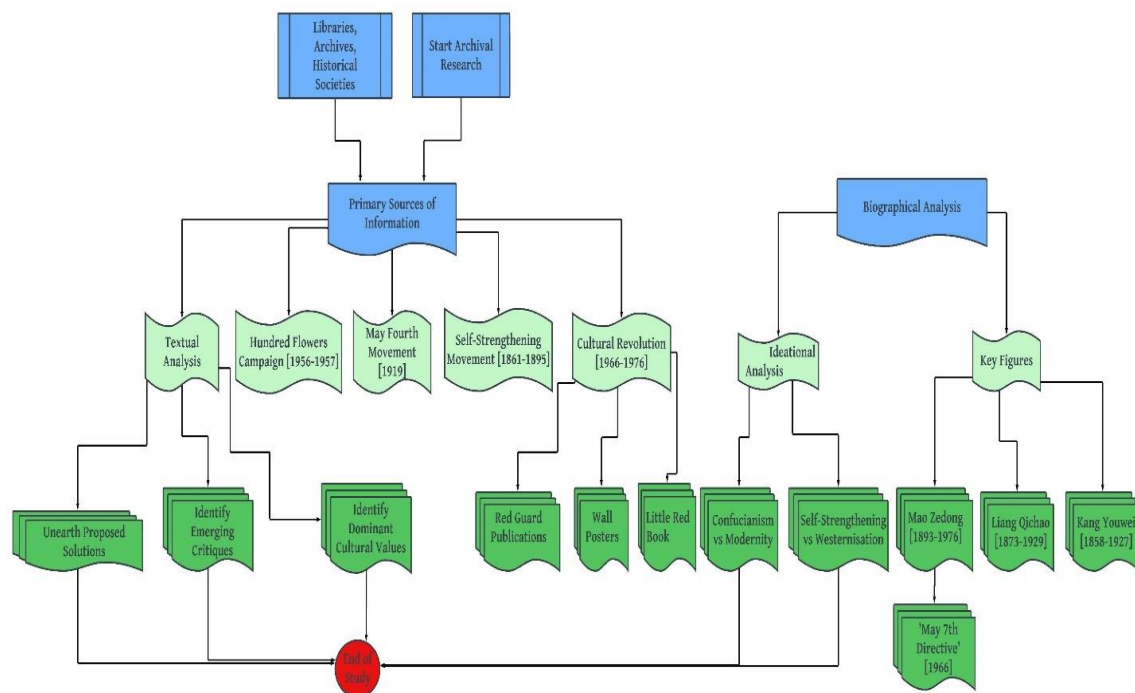


Figure 1: Illustration of the Historical Analysis Used in The Study

2.3 Outcomes and Analyses

Our study outcomes were focused on identifying recurring themes within China's modernization debates through historical document analysis and intellectual discourse examination. These themes included the tension between tradition and modernity, the perceived importance of education and technology, and the evolving views of the West. Additionally, by studying the works of key intellectuals, we were able to categorize and analyse different approaches to modernization. Our analysis focused on discourse analysis to examine the language used in historical documents before an ideational critique on the strengths and weaknesses of different modernization theories proposed by Chinese intellectuals. Finally, through historical contextualization, we placed these ideas and events within their broader social and economic context.

3. RESULTS

Examining cultural thought during China's late Qing modernization reveals key themes. The tension between tradition and modernity is evident in Kang Youwei's "Confucianism as a Progressive Religion," while Zhang Zhidong's "Exhortation to Learn" highlights the importance of Western

knowledge. Perceptions of the West also evolved, with early documents potentially expressing admiration and later ones a more critical view (see Table 1).

Table 1: Contextual Analysis of Recurring Themes in Modernization Debates

Theme	Description	Example Document
Tradition vs. Modernity	The tension between preserving traditional values and adopting Western ideas for progress.	Kang Youwei's "Confucianism as a Progressive Religion" (1888) argues for reforming Confucianism to adapt to modern needs.
Importance of Education and Technology	The belief that acquiring Western knowledge and technology is crucial for national strength.	Zhang Zhidong's "Exhortation to Learn" (1898) emphasizes the importance of learning Western military science and technology.
Perception of the West	Evolving views of the West, ranging from admiration for its power to suspicion of its intentions.	Early Qing documents might express awe at Western technology, while later documents by reformers might show a more critical stance.

Examining late Qing intellectuals reveals contrasting approaches to modernization. Kang Youwei's Westernization theory emphasized adopting Western models for comprehensive societal reform, potentially overlooking valuable aspects of Chinese culture (see Table 2)

Table 2: A Standard Comparison of Modernization Theories

Intellectual	Theory	Strengths	Weaknesses
Kang Youwei	Westernization	Emphasizes the need for comprehensive societal reforms based on Western models.	May lead to a complete rejection of valuable aspects of Chinese culture.
Zhang Zhidong	Self-Strengthening	Focuses on acquiring Western military and technological advancements.	May neglect necessary social and political reforms.
Yan Fu	Social Darwinism	Promotes competition and national survival as drivers of progress.	Can lead to social inequalities and disregard for ethical considerations.

In Table 2, Zhang Zhidong's focus on Self-Strengthening prioritized acquiring Western military and technological advancements, but risked neglecting necessary social and political reforms. Meanwhile, Yan Fu's emphasis on Social Darwinism, while promoting competition and national survival, could exacerbate social inequalities and ethical concerns. These

contrasting theories highlight the complex challenges China faced in navigating modernization during this period (see Figure 2).

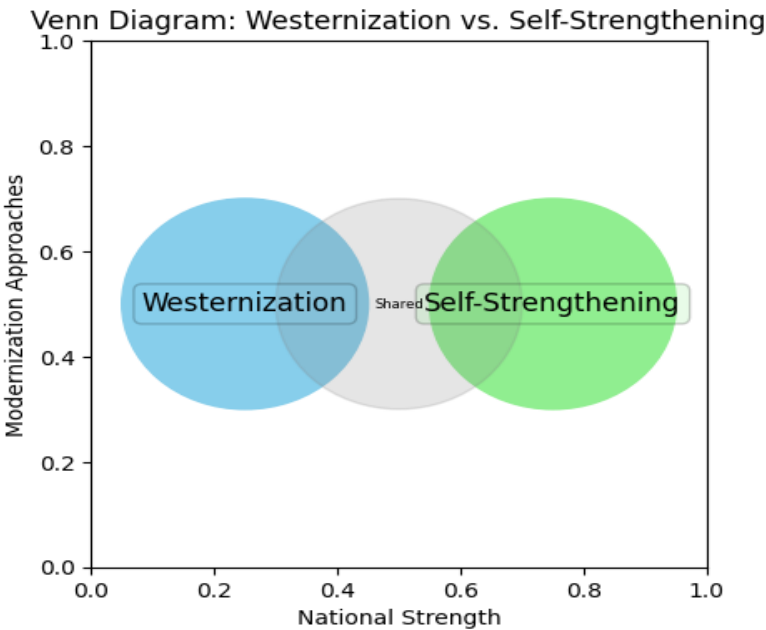


Figure 2: Venn Diagram Analysis of the Modernisation Approaches and National Strength Based on shared values.

Table 3: Ideational Critique of Modernization Theories

Theory	Proponent	Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Impact on China
Westernization	Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao	Offers a clear path to national strength and modernization.	Ignores China's unique cultural identity and may lead to social unrest.	Could lead to rapid modernization but risks cultural alienation.
Self-Strengthening	Zeng Guofan, Zhang Zhidong	Focuses on practical military and technological advancements.	May be insufficient to address broader societal and economic needs.	Could strengthen China's military but may not achieve true modernization.

In Table 3 and Figure 3, Westernization, championed by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, offered a clear path to progress by adopting Western institutions and technology. However, it risked neglecting China's cultural identity and potentially sparking social unrest. While this approach could lead to rapid modernization, it might come at the cost of cultural alienation. Conversely, Self-Strengthening, advocated by Zeng Guofan and Zhang

Zhidong, prioritized practical military and technological advancements. However, it might fall short of addressing broader societal and economic needs. While this approach could strengthen China's military, it might not achieve true modernization.



Figure 3: A word cloud of key themes derived from the Ideational of Modernisation Theories.

Table 4: Historical Contextualization of Intellectual Ideas

Intellectual Movement	Historical Context/Intellectual Influence	Influence on Modernization/Outcomes
Self-Strengthening Movement (Late 19th Century)	China's defeat in Opium Wars exposed military weakness.	Intellectuals like Zeng Guofan advocated for adopting Western military technology for defence.
May Fourth Movement (1919)	Disillusionment with Qing dynasty and Western imperialism.	Intellectuals like Lu Xun critiqued traditional values and advocated for cultural renewal and social change.
Hundred Days' Reform (1898)	Reformers like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao pushed for modernization measures.	Reforms were short-lived due to conservative resistance within the Qing court.
New Culture Movement (Early 20th Century)	Intellectuals challenged traditional culture and advocated for Western ideas like democracy and science.	Movement led to a shift in cultural values and paved the way for social and political change.

In Table 4, the Self-Strengthening Movement, sparked by military defeats, saw intellectuals like Zeng Guofan advocate for Western military

technology. In contrast, the May Fourth Movement, fuelled by disillusionment with the Qing and Western imperialism, saw Lu Xun and others critique tradition and advocate for cultural and social change. Reform efforts like the Hundred Days' Reform, though short-lived due to conservative resistance, and the New Culture Movement, which challenged traditional values and embraced Western ideas, both aimed to modernize China (see Figure 4).

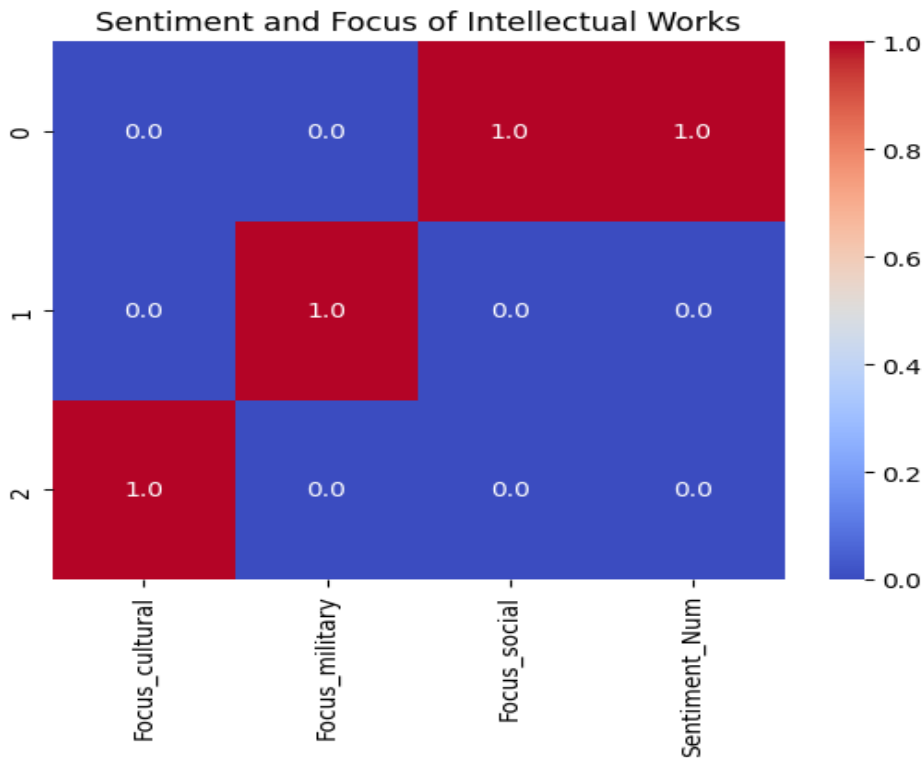


Figure 4: Heatmap Analysis of Sentiment and Focus on Intellectual Works

Table 5: Long-Term Impact of Cultural Revolution on Modernization

Aspect of Modernization	Impact of Cultural Revolution
Economic Development	The disruption caused by the Cultural Revolution hampered economic growth and technological advancements.
Education System	Educational institutions were heavily disrupted, leading to a decline in educational quality and a generation of youth with limited technical skills.
Social Change	The emphasis on revolutionary ideology over expertise stifled intellectual discourse and innovation, hindering social progress.

In Table 5, the Cultural Revolution's focus on ideology over expertise likely hampered economic growth, educational quality, and social progress by disrupting institutions and hindering the development of a skilled workforce and intellectual discourse.

Table 6: Shifting Cultural Values after the Cultural Revolution

Period	Cultural Thought	Significance for Modernization
Post-Mao Era (Late 20th Century)	Reassessment of Tradition & Reform	Re-engagement with Confucian values and pragmatic economic reforms led to a more balanced approach to modernization.
Contemporary China (21st Century)	Balancing Tradition & Modernity	China seeks to maintain its cultural identity while embracing technological advancements and economic growth.

In Table 6, in the post-Mao era, a reassessment of tradition and reform led to a more balanced approach to modernization. This involved re-engaging with Confucian values to provide social stability while implementing pragmatic economic reforms. This trend continues in contemporary China, where the nation strives to balance its cultural identity with the pursuit of technological advancements and economic growth.

4. DISCUSSION

China's modernization process during the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China era was significantly influenced by evolving cultural thought. Intellectuals and reformers struggled with the challenges of preserving tradition while embracing Western ideas for progress. This tension manifested in various theories and movements. Our findings propose that the Self-Strengthening Movement, led by figures such as Zeng Guofan and Zhang Zhidong focused on acquiring Western military technology to bolster national defence. Westernization theories by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, advocated for a more comprehensive adoption of Western models for societal reform. However, these approaches faced limitations. Self-Strengthening might not have addressed broader social and economic needs, while Westernization risked neglecting China's unique cultural identity and potentially sparking social unrest.

According to Brugger and Hannan (2019) modernisation can be viewed from various perspectives. The first perspective involved an ethnocentric approach that makes a society to visualise modernity and derive beneficial features from it. The second perspective involves technological advancements and the application of technology to contribute to the development of the society. Other perspectives involve multilinear approach to modernisation and views of humanity based on the universal

principles of freedom and reason. Zhang and Zhao (2023) found that the modernisation process in China has significant effects on the social and psychological behaviours of the Chinese by creating a macro model of driven production processes without a focus on the social and spiritual lives of individuals. Although modernisation in China has increased the material living standards of several individuals, there has been a decrease in the sense of happiness and fairness among individuals. Furthermore, the modernisation process in China has led to reduction in trust among the Chinese due to the complex trust patterns and benefits derived from modernisation.

Analyses showed that in the Qing dynasty, there was a strong attitude of conservatism, however, several artists were driven by innovation and individual ambitions. According to the critics of the late Ming dynasty such as Dong Qichang, the Qing painters were considered as “individualist” and “orthodox” masters (Li, 2021; Wang, 2019). Additionally, there were painting schools, for example the Four Masters of Anhui, Eight Masters of Nanjing and the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou. Most artists of the Qing dynasty had a strong attitude and preference towards “literati painting” (*wenrenhua*) that was considered a form of personal expression. The porcelains produced during the Qing dynasty displayed a high level of technically mastered skills without the existence of any marks of the potter’s hand. Several innovations involved the discovery of coloured glazes such as the *jihong* (blown-red or copper red), and the French also discovered the *sang-de-boeuf* (oxblood) and the emergence of two painting in Europe defined as *famille verte* and *famille rose* characterised by dominant green and rose, respectively.

The literature works during the Qing dynasty shared great resemblance to the Ming period with a special focus on classical forms of literature (Xu et al., 2021). Under the Manchurian regime, there was intense focus on the literacy inquisition in the 18th century while eliminating and destroying all subversive works and several writings on subversion were destroyed and the authors were either killed or jailed or sent into exile. There was a substantial development in the vernacular novels on the tales of adventure and romantic experiences. The opening of the Chinese ports to commercial overseas trade and movement was significantly increased.

Some of the significant musical developments during the Qing dynasty were the *jingxi* (Peking opera) that was based on an amalgamation of several regional musical theatre traditions that adopted several traditional instruments and incorporation of the flute, gongs, drums, double reed wind instruments, plucked flute, cymbals and clappers. The musical genre of the

Jingxi was deeply rooted in several regions of China except for Beijing and had few melodies with different lyrics during repetitions compared to other musical forms. Liu (2019) suggested that significant differences in the medical policy of China between 1940 and 1950 and the influence of the Chinese traditional medicine and Western medicine. However, recent studies have noted that there is a low level of success of traditional Chinese medicine in the modern China. The cultural thought of traditional medicine in China is one of the countries where traditional medical practices has been practiced and adopted in the national healthcare system. Some studies have also postulated that a combination of traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine is highly effective in treatment of diseases and alignment with the process of modernisation in China.

Moreover, we found that the Hundred Days' Reform attempted to implement modernization measures but faced conservative resistance. The May Fourth Movement, fuelled by disillusionment with the Qing dynasty and Western imperialism, critiqued traditional values and advocated for cultural renewal and social change. This era also saw the rise of New Confucianism, which sought to reinterpret Confucian principles to address the challenges of modernization.

Our study suggests that the modernisation of China is considered from a historical perspective process of transformation and change from “traditional based societies” to “modern oriented societies”. The process of modernisation in China led to significant changes in the social, economic and political landscapes that consequently accompanied cultural changes. The Chinese culture is one of the largest in Asia and has impacted worldwide with its unique arts, sciences, trade, cuisines and trade (Keightley, 2022). In the last 5 decades since the end of the cultural revolution, Chinese culture has undergone significant transformation and adapted to the realities of the modern world. Based on the historical perspective of China and recent changes, the Chinese are considered to have been open to the world for about 40 years which has led to outcomes of radical transformation, corporations and commercialisation.

One possible explanation is that in modern China, there are clear divisions between social attitudes of young and old, rural and urban dwellers. The older generation mainly in the rural areas tend to value and emphasize on the traditional elements of Chinese culture and seek to uphold it while the youths who are mainly in the urban cities embrace progressive ideals of technology and components of modernisation. The modern Chinese culture consists of the elements of preservation, innovation and modern evolutions in culture and economy. The modern

Chinese culture still borrows from the principles and guiding philosophy of Confucianism (Bresciani, 2023; Tan, 2018). Confucianism asserts the significance of productive and positive human interactions based on the notion of unequal relationships between individuals and asserts the hierarchical roles in the society. The teachings of Confucianism assumes that acceptance of this natural inequality forms the basis of stable relations and harmony in the society. Thus, the ideas of Confucianism are grounded on the basis of obedience, adherence and responsibility among Chinese. Social cohesiveness among the Chinese is embedded in the principles of the *Li*.

Li et al. (2022) suggested that China has undergone significant changes in the last 40 years due to modernisation and rapid urbanisation leading to conflicts on the desires to preserve historic cities and developing new cities. In a case study analysis of the World Cultural Heritage city of Pingyao, they demonstrated that different modes of development in the modern techniques of urbanisation compared to the construction techniques of ancient cities is a representation of the reduction and decline of the spatial structures and land fragmentation in China. Hung (2023) suggested that from the late Qing dynasty to the modern China, the changes and twists were driven by various aspects and particularly war with external powers such as Japan. Cultural practices in China can be examined from the rituals performed by the village operas. The traditional Chinese culture was embodied in values of unity, courage and sacrifice that was directly promoted in the rural areas through street performances and singing of drums.

According to Peters (2019) China is the world's largest economy and its cultural and military power have a significant influence across the world. The Chinese dream is in contrast to the American dream due to the larger number of resources and culture to draw upon including elements of cosmopolitanism and the future generations. The modern China is geared towards socialist modernisation with the evidence of programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative. It's expected that in 2050, China would be a socialist country that is highly prosperous, culturally advanced, harmonious and democratic. Additionally, Giles et al. (2019) suggested that the cultural revolution in China led to significant disruptions of the Chinese educational system and the return to schooling in China led to urbanisation and increased desire for individualism. After the cultural revolution, the average rate of returning to schools was about 50% with about 38% supply of instruments to schools.

Li and Meng (2022) suggested that there were scarring effects on the

deprivation of college education in China following the cultural revolution. They found that college enrolment system was suddenly stopped during the start of the cultural revolution and no records of admissions were found for 3 years between 1966 and 1969. As a result, there was a downward trend in the completion rates of college leading to reductions in labour supply, wealth and earnings for the next 3 decades. Tan (2017) suggested that the *Analects of Confucius* and *Xueji* are important elements of Confucianism in highlighting the practices and ideologies of education based on Confucianism. Fangjun (2009) proposed that modernisation in the West has lasted for over 200 years; however, in China, the modernisation theories gained traction in the 1960s and sought to experience transformation from the traditional practices to the modern practices. The theory of modernisation has been evolved and adjusted in social development, the Chinese has adopted suitable approaches of selectively utilising the useful and technological aspects of modernisation while discarding the unsound aspects of modernisation.

Hu et al. (2018) suggested that the traditional and modern cultures of the Chinese have effects on the moral priorities of young adults. There have been significant cultural changes in China in the last 40 years; however, little attention has been placed on the moral values of the Chinese people. The findings of Hu et al. (2018) proposed that young Chinese are still associating traditional cultures with morality of interpersonal obligations despite the continued existence of modernisation and globalisation. Wu (2012) proposed that China has conflicts with modernisation and globalisation from the West and its national cultural identities. The cultural traditions of China are distinct from the modernisation of the West and there has been conflicts in adopting the modernity to stand out in the world while maintaining its traditions and customs. Furthermore, Wei and Juan (2020) suggested that the younger Chinese generation has a more inclination to the Western values compared to the traditional Chinese values. These people are more individualistic and have a strong sense of self-expression. However, it was noted that they do not have a strong sense towards democracy despite holding the ideologies and principles of Marxism and nationality.

The short term-effects of the cultural revolution led to political instability and slow changes in the economic policies leading to slow and retarded economic growth and a diminishing capacity of the regime to supply essential goods and services to the people. At the death of Mao, there was a bureaucratic timidity because future changes in policy resulted in a significant disadvantage to those individuals who championed for

previous policies. Moreover, cultural revolution came to an end with more than 3 million deaths and several individuals seeking reinstatement for wrongful purges.

Alvarado (2019) proposed that the world had undergone significant transformation to the extremes and that the laws and regulations were over three thousand years old and were supposed to be annihilated due to the Western civilisation and emergence of modernisation. The fear of losing their culture, allowed the Chinese to engage in cultural conservation during the late Qing dynasty. Additionally, Keane and Su (2018) suggested that the revitalisation of the Chinese culture must involve taking into account the famous Chinese culture and teachings as the original and fundamental basis while supplementing it with Western skills. In the late Qing dynasty, there was a cultural crisis based on the principles of Confucianism since during the late Qing dynasty, Confucianism was actually considered Taoism (Neo-Confucianism) (Blitstein, 2021). The revival of Confucian classics is a genuine and serious attempt by the ideological community of China to utilise science and desires of emancipating the mind of several Chinese through the retrieval and reference to the ancient ideas of Confucianism (King, 2018).

5. CONCLUSION

The trend of modern thought processes in China expresses the significance of values attached by the Chinese scholars to transition from “rationality approaches” to “seeking for use approaches”. Thus, the trend in the later stages of the Qing dynasty was a clear rejection of science by the people, although, the Western culture had not penetrated into China and in the middle of the 19th century, there were several steps back into the ideals of Confucianism by the people.

The exploration of modernization theories in China during this period highlights the challenges and opportunities the nation faced. The emphasis on science and technology was crucial for development, but social and political reforms were also necessary. The tension between Westernization and preserving tradition remains a relevant theme in China's ongoing modernization journey. Overall, the study highlights the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in China's modernization journey. Different intellectual approaches emerged, each offering strengths and weaknesses, reflecting the complex challenges China faced in navigating this transformative period.

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