

Developmental idealism in China

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chs.sagepub.com**Arland Thornton¹ and Yu Xie^{2,3}**

Abstract

This paper examines the intersection of developmental idealism with China. It discusses how developmental idealism has been widely disseminated within China and has had enormous effects on public policy and programs, on social institutions, and on the lives of individuals and their families. This dissemination of developmental idealism to China began in the 19th century, when China met with several military defeats that led many in the country to question the place of China in the world. By the beginning of the 20th century, substantial numbers of Chinese had reacted to the country's defeats by exploring developmental idealism as a route to independence, international respect, and prosperity. Then, with important but brief aberrations, the country began to implement many of the elements of developmental idealism, a movement that became especially important following the assumption of power by the Communist Party of China in 1949. This movement has played a substantial role in politics, in the economy, and in family life. The beliefs and values of developmental idealism have also been directly disseminated to the grassroots in China, where substantial majorities of Chinese citizens have assimilated them. These ideas are both known and endorsed by very large numbers in China today.

Keywords

Developmental idealism, developmental hierarchies, social change, China

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Introduction

Our paper has a three-fold thrust: developmental idealism (DI), China, and the ways in which DI was introduced to and played a substantial role throughout Chinese history for nearly two centuries. DI is a cultural model that was created in northwest Europe and then disseminated through much of the world. It describes how the world works, where social and economic well-being is found, what individual and societal attributes are good, and the causes and consequences of development. As such, it provides a guide—even a general blueprint—for how societies should develop and achieve better standards of living.

We outline in this paper the forces that introduced DI into Chinese society, beginning in the mid-19th century and with increasing power through the rest of that century and the 20th century. We describe how China had historically seen itself as the Middle Kingdom, with all the resources and knowledge necessary for people to live full and abundant lives. This worldview was seriously challenged in the mid-19th century when northwest European countries forced themselves militarily into China and established Western enclaves. The historical Chinese worldview of itself at the center and apex of the world took another hit at the end of the 19th century, when Japan occupied much of China through military invasion.

With these events, China began a search for economic resources and military power that has extended up to the present. In the course of this effort, China adopted many of the propositions of DI and implemented them with great energy. This Chinese drive for development became a major story in China for nearly two centuries. The drive for development in China followed its own unique pathway, as China eventually adopted many of the elements of the Marxist model of development.

The story of DI in China is not limited to the worldviews, beliefs, and values of China's political and economic elites; DI concepts have been implemented in policies and programs that have changed the lives of individual members of Chinese society. In addition, many of the beliefs and values of DI have been widely disseminated to ordinary Chinese, with implications for behavior and relationships.

It is this story of DI in China that motivates and guides our paper. However, before describing the Chinese experience with DI, we discuss DI itself, explaining how it is a cultural model and discussing many of this model's elements. We then consider DI's introduction into and impact on China in particular, ending with a discussion of the dissemination of DI to the grassroots in that country.

DI as a powerful cultural model

DI is a broad and powerful cultural model with many different and interrelated elements. Like other cultural models, DI contains a worldview that tells people how the world works and how people should live in that world (D'Andrade, 1984; Fricke, 1997; Geertz, 1973; Johnson-Hanks et al., 2011). The DI cultural model not only includes beliefs about the world, but also indicates how to achieve individual and societal improvement. It also contains beliefs about how many

individual and social dimensions, such as family life, economic organization, education, and standard of living, are causes and consequences of development.

In addition, the DI cultural model specifies the nature of development and the good life by indicating proper and valued individual and societal goals, thus providing people with aspirations and motivations that guide behavior and relationships. DI also specifies the appropriate methods for pursuing the goals identified.

Some elements of the DI cultural model existed among ancient Greek and Roman writers, who indicated that human societies develop through similar stages but at different speeds (Nisbet, 1975; Pagden, 1982; Thornton, 2005; Thornton et al., 2015). These ideas were advocated by important European philosophers and social scientists during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. This differential rate of development along a fairly uniform pathway means that at any one historical time, societies could be observed to exist at different levels of development, ranging from quite low to quite high (Lerner, 1958; Mandelbaum, 1971; Nisbet, 1975). Not surprisingly, these writers placed northwest European populations and the diasporas from this region at the top developmental level and other societies lower in the developmental hierarchy. The indigenous peoples of Australia, Africa, and America were generally placed at the lowest levels, while countries such as China occupied middle positions in the European writers' hierarchies. For example, Edward Tylor (1871) traced the upward development ladder from the Australian aborigines through Tahiti, the Aztecs, China, Italy, and England (also see Stocking, 1987).

The placement of northwest Europe at the apex of development meant that northwest Europe and its overseas populations defined what the DI cultural model meant by development. Of course, northwest Europe and its overseas populations have experienced substantial changes over the past two centuries, meaning that the standard of development has been a moving target. Nevertheless, since the 19th century, when northwest Europeans became important in China, development generally has meant wealth, urban society, literacy and education, and technological sophistication. It has also meant placing less emphasis on families and communities and more on individuals, an older age at marriage, more autonomy for young people, relatively small households, and gender equality. The relatively uniform trajectory of development within the DI model has also meant that as societies become more developed, they move toward having attributes more similar to those of northwest Europe.

Furthermore, the cultural model of DI has an important evaluative component that values the attributes of modernity or development more highly than those associated with lower levels of development. That is, DI indicates that the developed attributes of northwest Europe are better than or preferable to other attributes. This implies that people in other societies are likely to benefit from emulating northwest Europe.

The DI cultural model also contains many beliefs about the factors that bring about development and about the consequences of development for other aspects of life. Very important here are the DI beliefs about social changes that accompany

economic development. Among such DI beliefs are that European modes of production, education, gender equality, smaller households, and individualism positively influence economic development. These DI beliefs about the causes of economic development guide people's beliefs about what they need to change for their societies to become more developed, and thus they serve as motivators for social change.

DI beliefs about the social consequences of economic development are also important. They encourage people to accept these consequences even if those same people previously viewed them as undesirable. This may lead people who would otherwise oppose such outcomes to accept the changes because they are believed to be the inevitable consequences of economic development, which is desired. Among the consequences of economic development contained within the DI belief system are gender equality, smaller families, later marriage, individualism, and more autonomy of young people.

DI has been disseminated across and within societies in nearly every part of the world through many different mechanisms (Thornton et al., 2015). The mechanisms spreading DI have varied across both time and geography. The amount and content of DI disseminated have also varied, depending on the nature and goals of those disseminating DI and the people who receive DI messages. We discuss below some of the mechanisms that have spread DI in China, as well as the content of the DI messages within that country.

Many factors facilitate the spread of DI around the world. Importantly, the ideas of DI are appealing because they claim to show what the good life is, where it can be found, and how to attain it. These ideas also have legitimacy because they are consistent with the unequal distribution of technological, military, and economic capabilities across the world's countries. In addition, supporters of DI can use economic, political, and police means to encourage, and sometimes coerce, the acceptance and implementation of DI. As we discuss below, each of these mechanisms has operated in the spread of DI in China.

It is also important to note that the people who are targets of DI are active rather than passive participants in the process of reacting to it. People who have received DI ideas, including Chinese, for many centuries have had their own values and beliefs about the world and how to live in it. These pre-existing values and beliefs are often inconsistent with the values and beliefs of DI, with the potential for competition among cultural systems. This means that the outcomes of the introduction of DI into a society are not deterministic or inevitable. People are actors who make decisions about their actions, and this can result in a combination of resistance, adoption, and hybridization—all with implications for individual and social change. Reactions can also vary substantially across individuals and groups, leading to clashes and conflict.

The spread of DI has likely led to many social and other changes around the world over the past two centuries. Examples include changes in clothing styles, calendars, writing systems, and family relations and behavior in Turkey during the early 20th century (Kavas, 2015; Kavas and Thornton, 2013). Another example is

the decline of marriage and childbearing and the rise of nonmarital cohabitation in Central and Eastern Europe during the late 20th century (Thornton and Philipov, 2009). Family and demographic changes in several middle-eastern countries are also relevant examples (Yount and Rashad, 2008). Also of interest in this regard are the worldwide programs to spread mass education, to delay marriage, and to reduce fertility (Thornton et al., 2015).

We now turn to a discussion of the spread of DI in China and describe some rather substantial changes in many aspects of Chinese life.

The spread and effects of DI in China

China did not become fascinated with development until the 19th century. In fact, there was no formal vocabulary for development, or for progress, in the classic Chinese language. For almost two thousand years, between the Qin Dynasty (founded in 221 BC) and the Opium War (1839–1842), China was largely isolated from other countries, particularly Europe. Despite frequent changes of dynasty throughout history, the basic elements of the Chinese Empire stayed largely unchanged: (1) a political structure for a unified China; (2) promoting agriculture while discouraging or even limiting commerce and sea navigation; and (3) an explicit emphasis on stability rather than change (Brown and Xie, 2015; Jacques, 2010; Spence, 1990). In many ways, Chinese complacency and isolationism made sense, as China already had vast territory, a large population, sophisticated technology for that time, and a healthy, agriculture-based economy. For example, around 1800, by all the available indicators, such as per-capita GDP, life expectancy, and urbanization, some regions of China scored just as high as Western Europe (Jacques, 2010). What ancient Chinese rulers feared most was foreign invasions that could disrupt China's stability. For this reason, they built the Great Wall to seal off China's northern borders and limited maritime activities on its eastern and southern oceans. Of course, China always maintained limited but regulated trade with other countries, through such avenues as the traditional Silk Road and the South China Sea. Contact with the West, however, was limited.

When King George III of England sent Lord George Macartney to ask Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty to open China for international trade in 1792, the request was flatly refused. Qianlong wrote an edict to King George III in which the Chinese emperor proclaimed, 'Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce' (Asia for Educators, 2016). Lord Macartney left China with a confident prediction that Europe-led, industry-based progress would sweep away China's preoccupation with stability and isolation: 'The human mind is of a soaring nature and having once gained the lower steps of the ascent, struggles incessantly against every difficulty to reach the highest' (quoted by Spence, 1990: 123).

China first experienced the power of industrialization through its defeat in the Opium War (1839–1842) with Great Britain, resulting in loss of territorial rights

and payments of war reparations. In subsequent decades, it suffered many more military defeats with all major foreign powers, including the newly industrialized former tributary state, Japan.

China's military defeats at the hands of foreign powers pushed many intellectuals around the turn of the 20th century to look for an explanation for China's humiliation. One of the most influential figures at the time was Yan Fu (1854–1921). As a young man, Yan Fu attended a Western school in Fuzhou, where he studied a variety of subjects, including science and English, and he later studied at the Royal Naval College in England. He is best known for his translations of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, and Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*. Through his studies of such works, he came to the conclusion that an evolutionary process explains China's failure to effectively deal with foreign powers. He wrote (quoted by Spence, 1990: 301):

Peoples and living things struggle for survival. At first, species struggle with species; then as [people] gradually progress, there is a struggle between one social group and another. The weak invariably become the prey of the strong, the stupid invariably become subservient to the clever.

Fu Yan's message had a large influence on China's nationalism, then and later, which became almost synonymous with a movement to strengthen China's technology and economy. This was the very early origin of DI in China.

Despite the rise of nationalism since Fu Yan's days, China remained weak and fragmented throughout the period between the Opium War and the end of World War II. In 1949, the Communist Party of China (CPC) founded the People's Republic of China, with Marxism as its core ideology. For our purposes, it is worth noting that Chinese communism embraced DI, as did Chinese nationalism. One major difference is that nationalism assumed that the traditional Chinese elite (landlord gentry and intellectuals) would serve as agents for China's development, whereas communism called for the masses to be its true movers.

After 1949, the CPC soon reformed many traditional Chinese practices in the family domain to be consistent with this development goal. For example, the 1950 Marriage Law formally legalized free-choice marriages and explicitly protected wives' rights and interests, making them equal to those of husbands (Mu and Xie, 2014). Later, it promoted a family planning program that supported late marriage and small family sizes (Lavelly and Freedman, 1990). During the Cultural Revolution, ancestor worship was viciously attacked and substantially eradicated as part of the 'Four Olds'—old customs, old habits, old culture, and old thinking (Spence, 1990). These large-scale changes motivated by DI have been instrumental in changing many aspects of family life, including a steady increase in age at marriage, a sharp decline in parental involvement in children's mate selection, and rapid reductions in fertility to very low levels.

Except during the Cultural Revolution, the CPC-led Chinese government has been continually pre-occupied with economic development. One prominent example was the Great Leap Forward, a politically engineered, radical movement launched by the CPC leader Chairman Mao and aimed at rapid economic development in 1957, only eight years after the founding of the new country and four years after the Korean War. The party had a clear official line for the movement: 'Going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better, and more economical results in building socialism' (Peng, 1987: 639). By all accounts, the movement was a huge failure, resulting, among other things, in enormous numbers of unnecessary deaths (Peng, 1987; Spence, 1990).

The next major political movement, also with disastrous consequences, was the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. During this period, social order was disrupted, economic development was deemphasized at the expense of political struggle, and China was isolated from the rest of the world. Largely in reaction to the economic stagnation that resulted from the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping reemphasized economic development as a top priority when he came to power as China's paramount leader in 1978. In the CPC's historical Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in 1978, the party explicitly decided to refocus its goals for China on 'Four Modernizations' in agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology (Spence, 1990). In essence, the party ushered in the new era of economic reform with a new focus on economic development. As stated by the 1978 Plenum:

Carrying out the Four Modernizations requires great growth in the productive forces, which in turn requires diverse changes in those aspects of the relations of production and the superstructure not in harmony with the growth of the productive forces, and requires changes in all methods of management, actions and thinking which stand in the way of such growth. Socialist modernization is therefore a profound and extensive revolution (quoted by Spence, 1990: 657).

The party soon began to implement this single-minded focus on economic development, with the amazing result of sustained rapid economic growth over the next three decades. Between 1979 and 2008, for example, per-capita GDP increased, net of inflation, at an annualized growth rate of 6.7% per year (Xie, 2011). However, the rapid growth during the economic reform has been accompanied by societally undesirable outcomes, such as widening regional unevenness (Xie and Hannum, 1996), growing income inequality (Xie and Zhou, 2014), and environmental degradation (MacBean, 2007). The rise in inequality is understandable, as it was already intended by the party's policy of '[letting] certain people become rich first in order to achieve common prosperity' (quoted by Xie and Hannum, 1996: 952). Indeed, our own work has shown that ordinary Chinese people are in general agreement that an increase in income inequality and economic development go hand in hand (Xie et al., 2012).

DI at the grassroots in China

The DI research group has devoted considerable time and energy to devising questions with which to measure the worldviews, beliefs, and values of people around the world concerning DI. As described by Thornton et al. (2010), this group's research involved conducting a series of qualitative and quantitative studies in several individual countries to discover what questions and interviewing protocols would be successful in those particular countries. The initial explorations were first conducted in Nepal, Argentina, and Egypt.

As the DI group accumulated successful experiences in these individual countries, it decided to become more assertive in the geographical scope of its work. Building on previous experience in Nepal, Argentina, and Egypt, the group constructed questionnaires and interviewing procedures that could be used any place in the world, though with adjustments where local conditions required them. The group first constructed these survey questionnaires in English and then translated and field-tested them sequentially in other languages and places. It continued this iterative procedure until it had a set of questionnaire items appropriate for many places. The group fielded most of these questionnaire items in representative samples of people in Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, and the United States.

The DI group has now completed data collections of some kind, mostly surveys, in 18 countries or regions around the world. The group has not attempted to collect data to represent the world's population or the world's countries. Instead, it has conducted data collection in a widely disparate group of places that vary across regions of the world, income levels, and religion. The 18 places where such data collections have been conducted include: Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Chinese mainland, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Nepal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan region, Turkey, the United States, and Vietnam.

The group has conducted surveys among four different Chinese populations. The first Chinese data collection occurred in October 2004 with a sample of more than 1300 freshman students enrolled in 'National Cheng-Chi University' in Taiwan. These students filled out questionnaires rating ten places on development five times during their college years. Thornton and Yang (2016, this volume) have analyzed these data and have demonstrated that students in Taiwan have ideas of development, that they can report those developmental ideas, and that these ideas are very similar to those of the United Nations Human Development Index (UN HDI). In fact, the Pearson correlation between the average ratings that Taiwanese students gave to places and the UN HDI score for those same places was remarkably high at .95.

Furthermore, Thornton and Yang report that average place development ratings are measured exceptionally reliably and are very stable across the college careers of the students participating in their study. Country development ratings ascertained at the individual level are also measured reliably—in fact, as reliably as other standard survey measures ascertained in the same data collection. In addition, the individual ratings of development by Taiwanese students are very stable

across the four-year college career. These findings provide strong support for the quality of these kinds of measurements.

The second survey with a Chinese population was conducted in 2006 as a multi-stage sample of six provinces within China: Beijing, Hebei, Qinghai, Hubei, Sichuan, and Guangdong. Interviews were obtained with nearly 5000 respondents who were, among other things, asked to rate, on scales from zero to ten, five different countries on their levels of development and on their levels of income inequality. These data were used by Xie et al. (2012) to show that the vast majority of people in China rate countries on development very similarly to the UN HDI. In fact, the Pearson correlation between the average respondent ratings for these five countries and the UN HDI was .94. These results demonstrate the widespread acceptance and use of this aspect of DI in China.

Xie and colleagues (Xie et al., 2012) also demonstrated that contrary to the DI model, the majority of people in China do not believe that development and equality go together. Instead the majority of Chinese people believe that development and inequality go together, as one would infer from the recent history of China, where both income and income inequality have increased rapidly together. This was demonstrated by showing that people tend to project their ratings of countries on inequality from their ratings of the same countries on development.

A third DI survey data collection with a Chinese population was conducted in 2007 in Gansu, a relatively poor rural province in west-central China, with a representative sample of more than 600 respondents, including an oversample of Muslims. This Gansu Province survey was primarily devoted to measuring people's endorsement of a wide range of developmental propositions. Respondents rated countries on development, were asked their beliefs about what family attributes are correlated with development, were asked for their views on societal development, and whether they endorsed various family attributes.

Thornton and his colleagues (2012a) found that Gansu respondents, like people elsewhere, rated countries very similarly to the UN HDI. Whereas the Pearson correlations between respondent ratings and the UN HDI were .97 for Taiwanese students and .94 for the participants in the six-province survey, the Pearson correlation for Gansu Province was .89. This result confirms that the use of the DI hierarchical model is very widespread in China, extending to a relatively rural area in west-central China.

Lai and Mu (2016, this volume) demonstrate that both Muslim and Han Chinese in Gansu Province understand the international model of development hierarchies in that they rate countries on development very similarly to the way the UN rates country development. Lai and Mu also expand upon this and demonstrate that while individuals have views of development hierarchies that generally match those of the UN, individual views of development are also affected by religious identity, with Muslim Chinese rating Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim country, considerably higher than do Han Chinese. This suggests that the Muslim religious composition of Pakistan may have caused Muslims in Gansu to give Pakistan's developmental level a more positive evaluation than other

groups did. This study thus provides evidence of the importance of the culture and knowledge existing among specific populations in modifying the global culture of development.

The dissemination of DI worldviews concerning developmental hierarchies to the grassroots within Chinese populations has been very extensive not only in absolute terms but also in comparison with other populations around the world. In the same paper documenting the use of developmental hierarchies among the citizens of Gansu, Thornton et al. (2012a) documented that, on average, participants in surveys in 13 countries or regions around the world understood the global international developmental hierarchy and rated countries similarly to the development ratings of the UN. In these 13 countries or regions, the correlations between average respondent ratings of places and the UN ratings of places ranged from a low of .75 to a high of .97. The .89, .94, and .95 correlations for respondents in the three Chinese data sets just described are, thus, in the upper range of the 13 places studied by Thornton et al. (2012a).

Thornton et al. (2012b) used the Gansu data to demonstrate that respondents in this relatively rural province of China widely endorse DI values and beliefs concerning fertility. In Gansu Province, 90% of respondents said that couples with many children are more common in non-developed places and 95% said that development would reduce fertility. Between 96% and 99% indicated that a family size reduction program would decrease infant mortality and increase each of the following things: the standard of living, the number of homes with television, and the level of education. Furthermore, 79% expressed the opinion that one child was better than three and 94% expected that fertility would decrease in China in the next two decades, despite fertility already being at a very low level when the survey was conducted.

The paper by Thornton et al. (2012b) documenting widespread endorsement of fertility values and beliefs in Gansu Province also included comparable data from Argentina, China, Egypt, Iran, Nepal, and the United States. Although this research revealed the widespread endorsement of DI beliefs and values concerning fertility in each of these data sets, endorsement was especially high in Gansu Province. Of the eight dimensions of DI mentioned above, Gansu Province demonstrated the highest endorsement of DI on six of them (Thornton et al., 2012a).

Lai and Thornton (2015) went beyond Thornton et al. (2012b) and used the Gansu data to demonstrate that individuals in this province have strong positive values concerning modernity in general as well as specific aspects of family life judged to be modern. In addition, the bulk of Gansu residents believe that modern families and modern societies go together, as predicted by the DI model. Furthermore, these authors demonstrate that the combination of endorsement of economic modernity and belief in the positive association between family and economic modernity leads to endorsement of family attributes seen as modern. This association is also consistent with what the DI framework predicts.

A fourth data set containing information about DI in a Chinese population is the China Family Panel Study (CFPS), a general-purpose, nationally

representative, longitudinal survey of Chinese society that was launched in 2010 by Peking University (Xie and Hu, 2014). A special feature of the survey is that it collects data through interviews with all members of sampled households aged 10 years and older (Xie and Hu, 2014). Full-scale follow-up surveys of the CFPS have now been conducted in 2012 and 2014. A 2011 follow-up survey was conducted, but it only included children at the individual level. A special DI module was added to the 2011 questionnaire for children, defined as respondents aged 10 to 15. The module included basic questions asking respondents to rank development levels of different countries and express opinions on the relationship between development and family behaviors. The DI group is in the early stages of analyzing the data from the 2011 CFPS survey. Preliminary analyses suggest that while the young respondents in the survey generally understood the presumed relationship between development and family-related behaviors, such as late marriage, low fertility, and gender equality, they also tended to greatly overrate Chinese economic development relative to that in other countries. The DI group does not yet understand the reasons for this response pattern. It is possible that nationalism education in China, coupled with recent rapid economic growth there, has made young Chinese believe that China has reached a particularly high level of economic development. The DI group anticipates that further analyses of these data will provide insight into how young people in China do or do not learn about DI.

Conclusion

Our goal in this paper was to examine the intersection of DI with China. It is clear that DI has been widely disseminated within China and has had enormous effects on public policy and programs, on social institutions, and on the lives of individuals and their families. However, DI did not come to China until the 19th century; before that, the basic DI concepts were absent from Chinese culture. It was only the many defeats of China in the 19th century that led numerous Chinese to seriously question the high position that they previously assumed their country held in the world hierarchy.

By the beginning of the 20th century, substantial numbers of Chinese had reacted to the country's defeats by exploring DI as a route to independence, international respect, and prosperity. There was, indeed, an extensive and persistent 'search for modern China' (Spence, 1990). Then, with important but brief aberrations, the country began to implement many of the elements of DI, a movement that became especially important following the assumption of power by the CPC in 1949. This movement has played a substantial role in politics, in the economy, in family life, and in the beliefs of individual Chinese concerning that central traditional Chinese institution—the family—the chain connecting the living with the ancestors and with future generations.

It is important to understand that the beliefs and values of DI have not only affected the lives of ordinary people in China through the impact of these beliefs and values on governmental policies and programs which, in turn, impact lives

at the grassroots. Rather, the beliefs and values of DI have been directly disseminated to the grassroots, where very substantial majorities of Chinese citizens have assimilated them. These ideas are both known and endorsed by very large numbers of Chinese.

However, at the same time as we emphasize the importance of the dissemination of DI in China, we do not claim that this transmission of DI beliefs and values to the grassroots has taken place without resistance. Instead, as in other places, there has been considerable resistance to DI ideas—a fact witnessed by considerable tension and conflict over these ideas and their implementation. We also make no claim that DI ideas have been completely accepted or that traditional beliefs and values existing in China prior to the arrival of DI have been completely rejected. Instead, we anticipate that both DI and traditional beliefs and values exist in China today—and that both continue to compete for adherents in many ways. This also means that the trends toward DI in China since the mid-19th century are not irreversible, but could evolve in interesting ways.

These observations merit calls for continuing research on DI in China. We have only begun to scratch the surface concerning the DI beliefs and values of individual Chinese. We also know very little about how these ideas do or do not combine with the values and beliefs that dominated Chinese culture before Europeans forced China to open its door in the 19th century and about how these ideas are translated (or not) into the behaviors of individuals, families, work groups, and communities. We encourage further research concerning these issues in China.

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