

THINKING ABOUT GOVERNANCE IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

Simon Marginson
University of Oxford
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- Only when Chinese universities reach their own deep roots can they achieve luxuriant leaves and make their most distinctive contribution.

~ Rui Yang (2011), Chinese ways of thinking in the transformation of China's higher education system. In J. Ryan (ed.), *China's higher education reform and internationalization* (pp. 34–47). Routledge.



- ‘The emphasis on agency and diversity is essential to understand the Chinese reinvention of tradition in a context of global modernity’

~ Klaus Muhlhahn, *Making China modern*, 2019, Belknap, Harvard UP, p. 350



- Shin, J. and Kim, Y. (2018). Changing patterns of higher education governance under neoliberalism: Global and East Asian perspectives. In J. Shin (ed.), *Higher education governance in East Asia: Transformations under neoliberalism* (pp. 223-242). Springer.
- Perry, E. (2020). Educated acquiescence: How academia sustains authoritarianism in China. *Theory and Society*, 49, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09373-1>

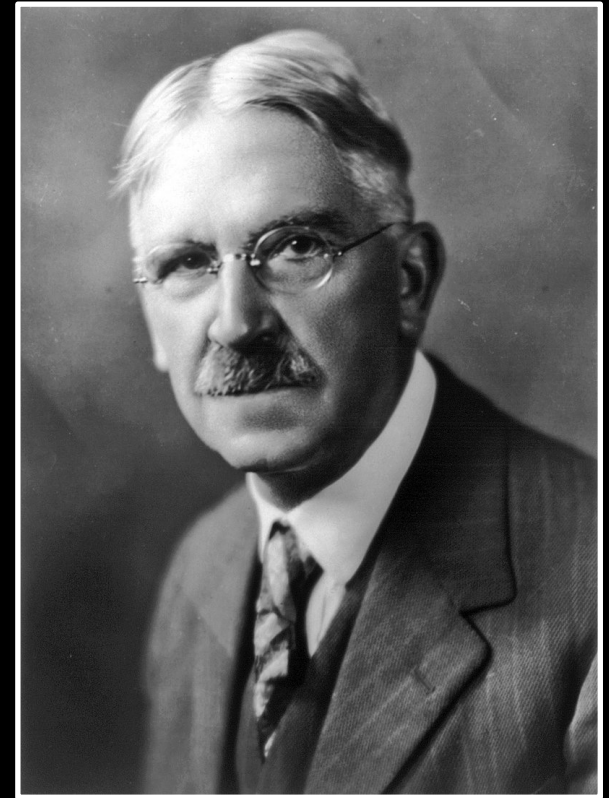
- ‘Constructing and upholding difference between the Westerners and the Chinese, or between the centre and the periphery, has long been identified as a key tenet of colonial rule’

~ Klaus Muhlhahn, *Making China modern*, 2019, Belknap, Harvard UP, p. 350



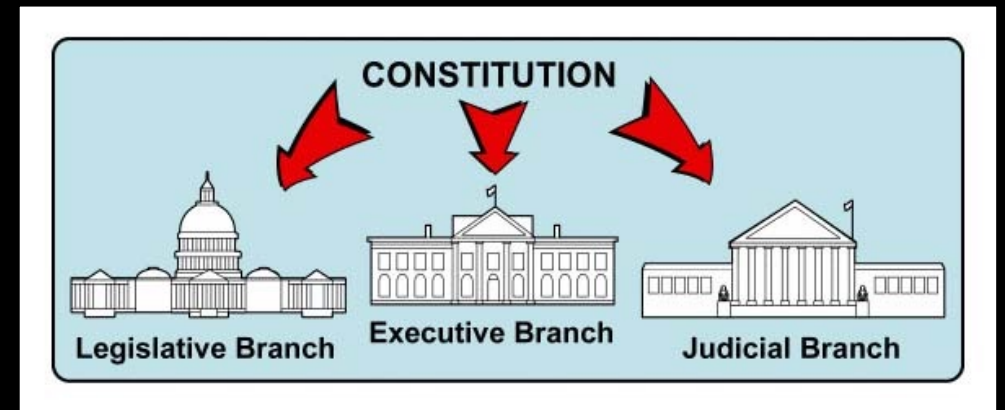
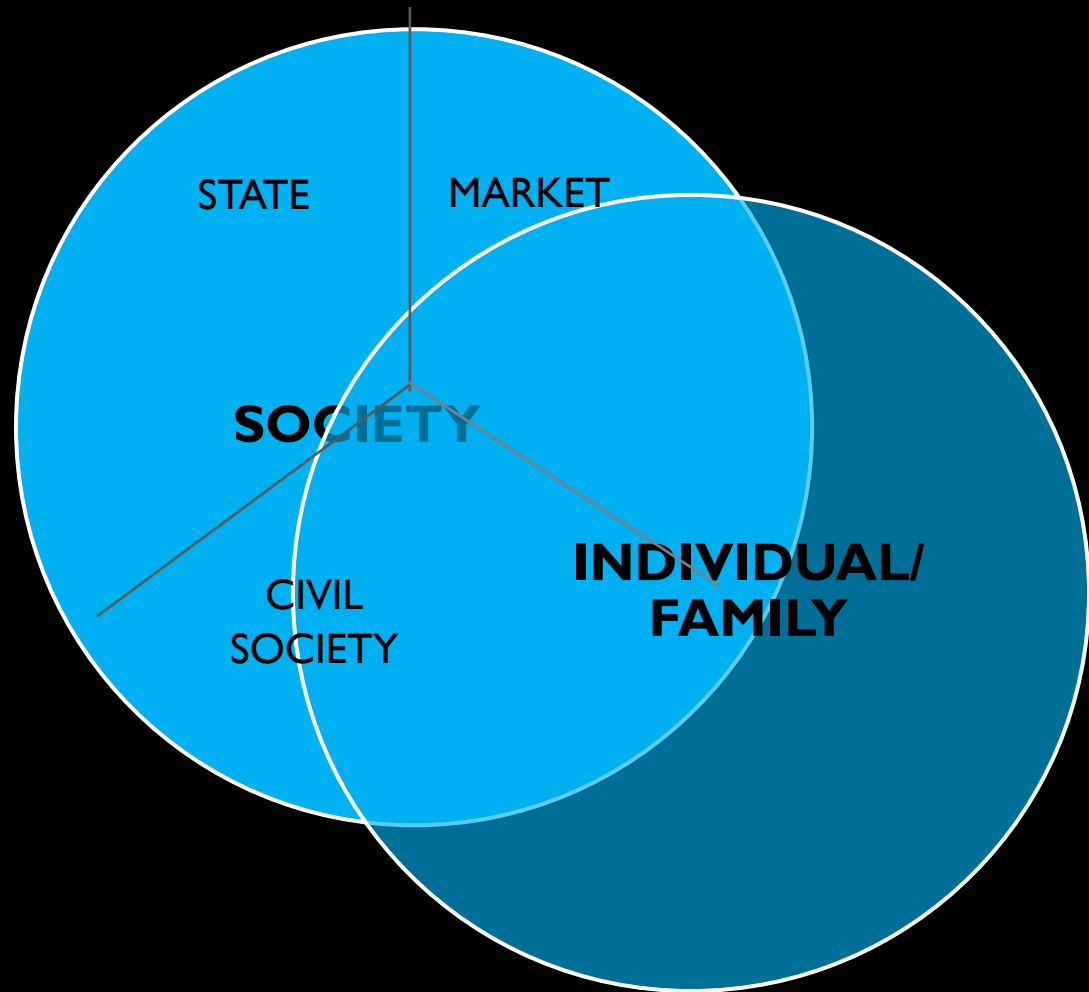
- ‘China can be understood only in terms of the institutions and ideas which have been worked out in its own historical evolution’ (John Dewey)
- Chinese politics ‘has to be understood in terms of itself’, not translated into an ‘alien’ political classification

~ cited in Jessica Ching-Sze Wang (2007), *John Dewey in China: To teach and to learn*. State University of New York Press, Albany, p. 76



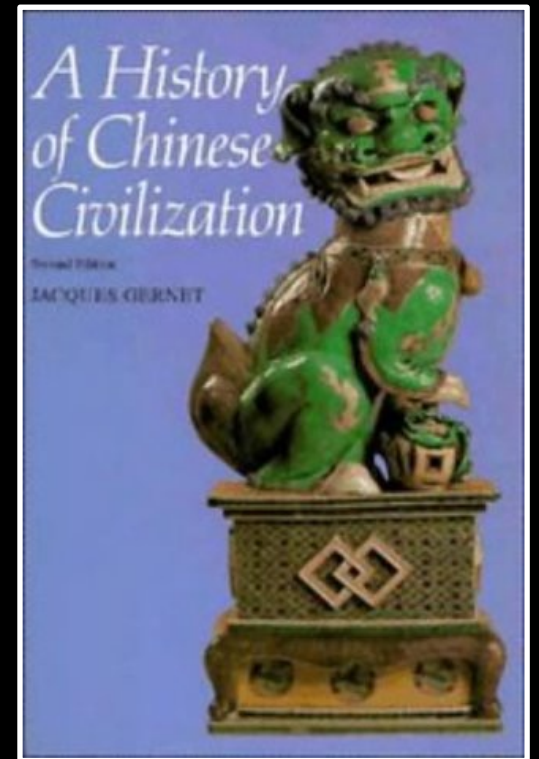
1. China's higher education can only be understood only in relation to the Sinic comprehensive state, qualitatively different to the Western state;
2. This state tradition in higher education is associated with a distinctive approach to devolution, and a long habit of using plural forms of authority;
3. Practices of intellectual freedom in China only partly intersect with Western academic freedom. Each is empowering but in different ways;
4. There are special problems in the humanities and social sciences;
5. There are tensions in the trajectory of governance.

EURO-AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE NORMALISES A STRONG BUT LIMITED STATE AND DIVIDED POWERS



- ‘The development of the political sphere in the Chinese world and its pre-eminence over all the other (military, religious, economic) is one of its most characteristic marks ... This is certainly one of the constants and one of the great original aspects of the Chinese world, one that distinguishes it from all others.’

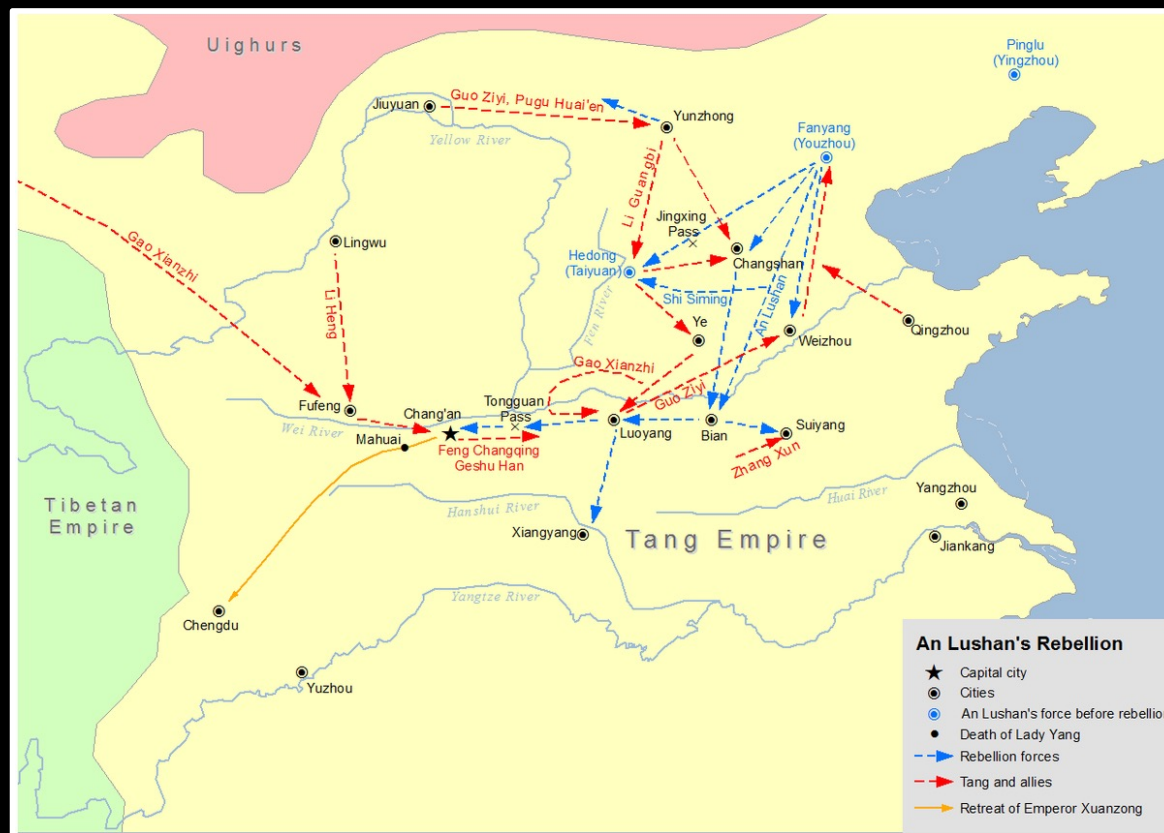
~ Jacques Gernet (2002). *A history of Chinese civilization* . 2nd Edition, Transl. J.R. Foster and Charles Hartman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 28-29



THE TANG DYNASTY LESSON: DEEP DEVOLUTION + CENTRAL CONTROL



Said to be An Lushan



- ‘Localisation and the consolidation of unified imperial power appear to be positively correlated.’

~ Blockmans, W. and De Weerdt, H. (2016). The diverging legacies of classical empires in China and Europe. *European Review*, 24 (2), 306-324.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798715000654> (p. 311) ’

- The Euro-American category of ‘institutional autonomy’ is inappropriate in China, where the legal potential for separation is absent. The government-university relation is more accurately defined in terms of *zizhu*, meaning ‘self-mastery.’

~ Ruth Hayhoe (1996). *Chinese universities 1895-1995: A century of cultural conflict*. Garland Press.



- Ruth Hayhoe argues that Western notions of academic freedom as negative freedom, meaning freedom from constraint and coercion exercise some influence but on the whole are ‘not a good fit for China’. The Chinese tradition is one of ‘intellectual freedom’, a form of positive freedom in Berlin’s sense, empowerment in exercising responsibility and making a contribution.

~ Ruth Hayhoe (2011). Introduction and acknowledgements. In R. Hayhoe, J. Li, J. Lin and Q, Zha (eds.), Portraits of 21st century universities: In the move to mass higher education (pp. 1-18). Springer. (p. 17)



- Shi, X. and Wu, Z. (2018). Paradigm shift of higher education governance in China. In J. Shin (ed.), *Higher education governance in East Asia: Transformations under neoliberalism* (pp. 55-72). Springer
- Shen, W. and Ma, W. (2018). The neoliberalism reform under the legacy of planned economy: The Peking University case. In J. Shin (ed.), *Higher education governance in East Asia: Transformations under neoliberalism* (pp. 143-160). Springer.

- Is it possible to sustain epistemic and thematic diversity in the social sciences and humanities on a stable basis?

This could be a primary engine room for the evolution of 'Chinese characteristics' in and through higher education

- Tensions in governance in higher education in China

- “It is hard to overstate the impact these strictures had on academic discourse and the intellectual environment ’

~ Klaus Muhlhahn, *Making China modern*, 2019, Belknap, Harvard UP, p. 565



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CONCLUSIONS