Media and Politics

Discourses, Cultures, and Practices

Edited by Bettina Mottura, Letizia Osti and Giorgia Riboni

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Page dimensions: 595.2x841.8
Media and Politics: Discourses, Cultures, and Practices

Edited by Bettina Mottura, Letizia Osti and Giorgia Riboni

This book first published 2017

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2017 by Bettina Mottura, Letizia Osti, Giorgia Riboni and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.


The book is part of a research project on the language of the Media based at the University of Milan’s Department of Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication and Contemporary Asia Research Centre (CARC). It is published with the support of the Department of Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables, Figures and Illustrations ................................................................. ix

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
Bettina Mottura, Letizia Osti, Giorgia Riboni

Section One: News Production and Reproduction

Chapter One ................................................................................................................. 16
Social Media or Traditional Media: Who Is the Real Agenda Setter?
Stefano Iacus, Andrea Ceron, Luigi Curini

Chapter Two ............................................................................................................... 35
“Tu n’as pas de place pour un petit Somalie?” Language, Proximity and Impact in the Globalized Political Mediascape
Geert Jacobs

Chapter Three ........................................................................................................... 52
Re-Writing and Translation in the News Production Process:
News Agency Wires
Giuliana Garzone, Chiara Degano

Chapter Four ............................................................................................................. 94
Reporting on Chinese Politics: A Genre-based Analysis of Xinhua
News Agency Dispatches
Bettina Mottura

Chapter Five ............................................................................................................. 112
A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Written English Version and the Persian Version of BBC News
Faramarz Shadloo

Chapter Six ................................................................................................................. 127
Wo shi Zhali ma? The Representation of the Charlie Hebdo Case in Chinese Press Commentaries and Editorials
Emma Lupano
Chapter Seven .................................................................................................................. 146
The Domestic Uses of Prestige in China: The People’s Daily and the 2014 APEC Summit in Beijing
Simone Dossi

Chapter Eight .................................................................................................................. 163
The Discourse of Disability Policies: Focus on the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN-Enable Website News Section
Francesca Santulli

Section Two: Political Communication

Chapter Nine .................................................................................................................. 184
American Presidential Inaugural Addresses: Exploring a Genre
Cristina Arizzi

Chapter Ten .................................................................................................................... 208
Symbolization and Discursive Construction in Chairman Mao’s Political Communication (with the Great Leap Forward Movement as Case Study)
Jing Xu, Alice Giusto

Chapter Eleven .............................................................................................................. 225
Putting into Practice “Core Confucian Values”: Intertextuality and Ideology in Xi Jinping’s May 4th 2014 Speech
Paolo Magagnin

Chapter Twelve .............................................................................................................. 241
Soft Power Narrative in Contemporary China: Official Discourse and the Media
Natalia Riva

Chapter Thirteen ............................................................................................................ 264
Constructing Syriza: The Greek Elections in British Online Newspapers and Blogs
Giorgia Riboni

Chapter Fourteen ......................................................................................................... 289
Female Politicians in Serbian Print Media during the 2014 Parliamentary Election Campaign
Dijana Subotički Miletić
Chapter Fifteen ............................................................................................................. 310
Mirko Benedetti

Section Three: Narratives and Counter-Narratives

Chapter Sixteen ............................................................................................................. 330
Measuring Transnational Memory? Discovering the Potential of the Corpus-Linguistic Analysis of Historical References in Debates on Current Conflict
Eric Sangar

Chapter Seventeen ......................................................................................................... 356
Building a Collective Memory on Individual Lives: Obituary as a New Genre in 21st-Century China
Paola Paderni

Chapter Eighteen .......................................................................................................... 373
Re-Framing the Battle and Enemy in the Media Discourse of 1990s Turkey
Aysun Kiran

Chapter Nineteen .......................................................................................................... 392
Narratives Travelling from the Local to the Global
Antonella Ceccagno

Chapter Twenty ............................................................................................................. 410
The Commodification of Loss: Advertising and the Rhetorical Exploitation of Post-Industrial Narratives as Myth-Reinforcing Symbols in Crisis-Ridden America
Paola Catenaccio, Roberta Garruccio

Chapter Twenty One ..................................................................................................... 436
Discursive Pitfalls of the “Smart City” Concept
Maria Cristina Paganoni

Chapter Twenty Two .................................................................................................... 454
Alternative Media: Cairo’s Graffiti and Street Art in the Jan. 25th Revolution
Elisa Pierandrei
Chapter Twenty Three ............................................................................. 473
Satire and Dialect in the Egyptian Press in the 2000s: Bilāl Faḍl
Cristina Dozio

Afterword ................................................................................................ 491
All Entangled in the Web: A Short Reflection on the Condition
of Culture and Politics in the Network Society
Gianni Turchetta
CHAPTER ELEVEN

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE
“CORE CONFUCIAN VALUES”:
INTERTEXTUALITY AND IDEOLOGY
IN XI JINPING’S MAY 4TH 2014 SPEECH

PAOLO MAGAGNIN

1. Xi Jinping’s Speech Style and the Use of Quotations

The current Chinese leadership, which emerged from the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in November 2012, is represented by Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC, President of the People’s Republic of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Upon becoming the country’s new leader, Xi immediately consolidated his rule through vigorous anti-corruption campaigns, concentration of power, enforcement of party discipline and far-reaching efforts in political communication in the form of a populist propaganda project supported by massive media coverage. Following Xi Jinping’s rise to power, a burgeoning number of newspaper articles and scholarly papers focusing on his public speaking style and rhetorical techniques have appeared, indicating special attention to the leader’s linguistic and discursive strategies. The urge to “study and implement the
spirit of the series of speeches by General Secretary Xi Jinping” (xuexi guanche Xi Jinping zongshuji xilie jianghua jingshen 学习贯彻习近平总书记系列讲话精神) has since become a pillar of propaganda and ideological work – namely the set of activities aiming to shape and consolidate socialist values, preventing potentially dangerous deviations. Moreover, the study of Xi Jinping’s speeches and ideology has quickly become a hot topic in academic circles, while a growing number of scholars turn to this generously funded field of research (Huang 2014). At a more popular level, an app called Xuexi Zhongguo 学习中国 (“Study China”[^3]), allowing users to receive updates on Xi’s activities and speeches, was developed and launched by the Central Party School of the Communist Party in April 2015.

Among the studies focusing on Xi Jinping’s political communication, one in particular points out the Chinese General Secretary’s painstaking attention to a refined speech style (youliang wenfeng 优良文风), his coherent logic and well-structured argumentation based on brevity (duan 短), concreteness (shi 实), and originality (xin 新), as well as his talent in creating a pleasant atmosphere by resorting to vivid imagery, figurative devices (opposition, parallelism, rhythmic patterns etc.), idiomatic expressions, and recollection of personal anecdotes (Ma and Li 2014). The extensive use of proverbs and adages, combined with a limited use of neologisms, has also been observed (Lin 2014). Xi’s ability to use simple, common language to expound complex theories and to describe the mechanisms of government, as well as his storytelling skills (Zhao 2014), have been seen as a reflection of a pragmatic, down-to-earth attitude (jiediqi 接地气) (Zhao 2014; Wen 2014; Zhang 2015). The “discursive force” (huayuli 话语力) of Xi’s speeches was singled out for scrutiny (Liu 2013), but the General Secretary’s discursive style has also been described as concrete, popular, target-focused, and having a strong “Chinese taste” (Zhongguo wei 中国味) (Dong and Cheng 2014, 10).

The above-mentioned features of Xi Jinping’s oratorical style are analysed in detail, drawing on examples from his speeches, in a book by Jiao Tong University professor Chen Xixi (2014), who also devotes a substantial section of his study to an analysis of Xi’s classical quotations. The ubiquitous use of quotations, allusions, and traditional cultural references had already been identified as a major trait–possibly the most

[^3]: It is also a play on the surname Xi 习, literally “practice” or “exercise” as in xuexi 学习 “study.” Therefore, the name of the app can also translate as “Study Xi’s China.”
distinctive one—of Xi Jinping’s speech style (Zhang 2013; Ma and Li 2014). An in-depth look at the significance of learned allusions taken from various philosophical sources is also the subject of a recent study by Scarpari (2015a). This technique is understood as allowing the speaker to “discard the dross and retain the essential” (qu cu qu jing 去粗取精) (Dong and Cheng 2014, 9), and a reflection of both Xi Jinping’s erudition and the new leadership’s integrity (Li 2013, 50).

As early as in 2013, journalists and scholars started collecting selected classical references from Xi’s speeches, tracing them back to their literary or philosophical source and providing explanations, so as to make them more accessible to a broader audience. A number of concise catalogues have since appeared, one after another (Li Q. 2013; Yang 2013; Li Si 2013; Zhang 2014; Li She 2015); interestingly enough, the Xuexi Zhongguo app also features a Yin jing yong dian 引经用典 (Quotations from the Classics) section where selected references are clarified. However, a more comprehensive collection is found in Chen Xixi’s aforementioned study, which compiles 70 glossed quotations, and especially in Xi Jinping yong dian 习近平用典, “Quotations by Xi Jinping” (Renmin ribao pinglunbu 2015). This wide-ranging volume gathers and annotates 135 literary references found in the General Secretary’s speeches up to 2014, providing a “useful first reference tool for those lacking the necessary background knowledge to grasp the entire range of meanings and the variegated cultural references in each aphorism” (Scarpari 2015a, 163; my translation).

The use of classical quotations is by no means a novelty in Chinese political discourse from ancient times to the present day, with the notable exception of the Maoist period (1949-1976). It is not so much a display of erudition as a way for speakers to exploit the authority of classical texts in order to lend more credibility and discursive force to their own statements. Moreover, in recent times, the tradition—and particularly Confucian thought—has been re-evaluated as a source of ethical principles that could help counter the effects of decades of rapid but uneven economic growth: in this perspective, the habit of quoting the classics is a consequence of the upswing in the importance of traditional culture (Scarpari 2015a, 164).

However, when analysed in a specific discursive context, this rhetorical device can reveal a broader array of meanings, casting light on the strategies adopted in establishing a discursive and ideological perspective at various levels. This study will provide an insight into some aspects of Xi Jinping’s ideological mission, using as a case study his speech “Qingnian yao zijue jianxing shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhiguan” 青年
要自觉践行社会主义核心价值观 (Xi 2014a), which was delivered at the seminar with teachers and students of Peking University on May 4, 2014. The significance and ideological implications of the intextuality at play in Xi Jinping’s speech will then be scrutinised by drawing on selected textual examples. The notion of intextuality adopted in this research follows Segre’s broad definition as “the presence of earlier texts within a given text” that brings to light the “lines of a cultural filiation” and the “traits of a voluntary inheritance.” From this perspective, texts no longer represent isolated messages but become “part of a discourse developed through texts.” Moreover, by virtue of intextuality, the language, semantic code and literary sub-codes of a text partially absorb those of an earlier one, adapting them to a new discursive context (Segre 1985, 86; my translations).

The Chinese transcript is taken from the collection Xi Jinping tan zhiguo lizheng 习近平谈治国理政 (Xi 2014a), while the translations follow the English version “Young People Should Practice the Core Socialist Values” (Xi 2014b).

2. Intertextuality in the May 4th 2014 Speech at Peking University

In modern and contemporary Chinese political communication, the speeches held on May 4 have a strong symbolic value. The May Fourth Movement (Wusi yundong 五四运动) was a nationalistic, anti-imperialistic, radically anti-traditional (notably anti-Confucian) protest movement that broke out against the resolution of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, whereby the former German territories of Shandong were granted to Japan instead of being returned to China, and against the Chinese government’s weak response to the Western powers’ decision. It was originally a student movement closely connected to Peking University, where it first erupted. It contributed to the dissemination of Marxist thought in China and, eventually, to the birth of the CPC in 1921, as Xi Jinping himself recalls in his speech (Xi 2014a, 166). The Movement is also celebrated as the event that helped put the country on the glorious path to the Liberation and, eventually, to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. The intrinsic importance of the event, combined with the location and the symbolic power of the Movement’s 95th anniversary, grants special prominence to the General Secretary’s speech.
The speech features a brief opening section asserting the historical significance of the May Fourth Movement and the importance of reviving its spirit in present times; the middle part elaborates the notion of “core values” (hexin jiazhiguan 核心价值观), describing in detail the moral and behavioural standards to be adopted by youth; the closing section is centred on the Chinese government’s efforts to promote higher education and on the crucial role young people are bound to play in society.

Despite its relative brevity (6,051 characters), Xi’s speech contains 36 quotations, making it the densest in intertextual terms among all the speeches contained in the collection. There are 10 references to the founding text of Confucianism, the Lunyu 论语 (The Analects); in addition, there are 4 quotations from the Mengzi 孟子 (Mencius), 2 from the Daxue 大学 (The Great Learning) and 1 from the Zhongyong 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean)⁴. In addition to the excerpts from these “Four Books” (sishu 四书) of Confucianism, the speech also counts 2 quotations from the Zhouyi 周易 or Yijing 易经 (The Book of Changes), 1 from the Shangshu 尚书 or Shujing 书经 (The Book of Documents), and 1 from the Liji 礼记 (The Records of Rites), namely three of the Confucian “Five Classics” (wujing 五经). Other classical sources, not necessarily connected with Confucianism, include the historical works Zhan guo ce 战国策 (The Strategies of the Warring States) and the Ri zhi lu 日知录 (Records of Daily Knowledge), the philosophical works Liuzi 管子, Guanzi 管子 and the Daoist classic Laozi 老子, and “Jie zi shu” 诫子书 (Advice to My Son) by Zhuge Liang 诸葛亮 (181-234), each quoted once.

Verses from the poems “Zhushi” 竹石 (Bamboos amid Rocks) by Zheng Xie 郑燮 (1693-1765), “Lang tao sha jiu shou” 浪淘沙九首 (Waves Beat on the Sand–Nine Poems) by Liu Yuxi 刘禹锡 (772-842) and “Changsha” 长沙 (Changsha) by Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893-1976), respectively, are also mentioned. Lastly, Xi borrows from the words of modern intellectuals, namely Li Dazhao 李大钊 (1889-1927), one of the founders of the CPC, Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936), the father of modern Chinese literature and major inspirational figure of the May Fourth Movement (2 quotations), Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) and Mei Yiqi 梅贻琦 (1889-1962), educators and former presidents of Peking University and Tsinghua University, respectively.

⁴ In the notes to the Chinese text, the quotations from the Daxue and one of the two from the Zhongyong are indicated as being drawn from the Liji, of which the two books were originally part (Xi 2014a, 176, 178). However, herein I have considered the two texts as autonomous.
Quotations from the Confucian canon are not only predominant in quantitative terms, they are also crucial in setting the tone of the speech. After his introductory remarks, Xi immediately proceeds to expound his vision of “core values” by resorting to the philosophical tradition:

古人说:“大学之道,在明明德,在亲民,在止于至善。”(Xi Jinping 2014a, 168)
An ancient proverb goes: “The way to great learning is to manifest bright virtue and to treat the people as one’s own family, thereby arriving at supreme goodness.” (Xi 2014b, 187)

中国古代历来讲格物致知、诚意正心、修身齐家、治国平天下。(Xi 2014a, 169)
Since ancient times the Chinese people have developed their country through studying the nature of things, correcting thoughts with sincerity, cultivating the moral self, managing the family, governing the state and safeguarding peace under Heaven. (Xi 2014b, 188)

These quotations from the Daxue contain, in a very condensed form, the core teachings of the book, also known as “the three principles and eight objectives” (san gang ba mu 三纲八目). The former are “bright virtue” (ming de 明德), “loving the people” (qin min 亲民), and “attaining superior goodness” (zhi yu zhi shan 止于至善), while the latter embrace “investigating the nature of things” (ge wu 格物), “attaining knowledge” (zhi zhi 致知), “being sincere” (cheng yi 诚意), “having a righteous heart” (zheng xin 正心), “cultivating oneself” (xiu shen 修身), “managing the family” (qi jia 齐家), “governing the state” (zhi guo 治国) and “pacifying the world” (ping tianxia 平天下)⁵.

These references allow Xi Jinping to draw an unbroken line connecting traditional norms of conduct and contemporary “socialist” virtues in which the individual, social, and national dimensions are still hierarchically structured but intimately interconnected. As ancient principles are understood today, Xi elaborates, “studying the nature of things,” “correcting thoughts with sincerity,” and “cultivating the moral self” belong to the individual, “managing the family” is a social duty, while “governing the state” and “safeguarding peace under Heaven” are national in nature. The “core socialist values” (shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhiguan 社会

⁵ The four latter principles are also synthesised in the idiomatic expression xiu qi zhi ping 修齐治平, “to educate (oneself), to regulate, to govern, to pacify,” used on a later occasion by Xi and analysed in detail by Scarpari (2015a, 168-170).
Putting into Practice “Core Confucian Values”

主义核心价值观 advocated by Xi follow the same threefold categorisation: patriotism (aiguo 爱国), dedication (jingye 敬业), integrity (chengxin 诚信), and friendship (youshan 友善) are individual virtues, freedom (ziyou 自由), equality (pingdeng 平等), justice (gongzheng 公正) and rule of law (fazhi 法治) are social virtues, whereas prosperity (fuqiang 富强), democracy (minzhu 民主), civility (wenming 文明) and harmony (hexie 和谐) are national values. Moreover, Xi stresses that, since the core values of a nation are intimately connected to its history and culture, China should learn from other civilisations, but not slavishly copy foreign models (Xi 2014a, 171).

The notion of a continuum between the ancient and the contemporary and that of a national identity derived from ancient wisdom also underlies the long list of classical references made by Xi halfway through his speech:

比如，中华文化强调“民惟邦本”、“天人合一”、“和而不同”，强调“天行健，君子以自强不息”、“大道之行也，天下为公”；强调“天下兴亡，匹夫有责”，主张以德治国、以文化人；强调“君子喻于义”、“君子坦荡荡”、“君子义以为质”；强调“言必信，行必果”、“人而无信，不知其可也”；强调“德不孤，必有邻”、“仁者爱人”、“与人为善”、“己所不欲，勿施于人”、“出入相友，守望相助”、“老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼”、“扶贫济困”、“不患寡而患不均”，等等。像这样的思想和理念，不论过去还是现在，都有其鲜明的民族特色，都有其永不褪色的时代价值。这些思想和理念，既随着时间推移和时代变迁而不断与时俱进，又有其自身的连续性和稳定性。(Xi 2014a, 169)

Here are some quotations from ancient classics that I’d like to share with you today:

“The people are the foundation of a state,”
“The harmony of Nature and man,”
“Harmony without uniformity,”
“As Heaven changes through movement, a gentleman makes unremitting efforts to perfect himself,”
“When the Great Way prevailed, a public spirit ruled all under Heaven,”
“Everyone is responsible for his country’s rise or fall,”
“Govern the country with virtue and educate the people with culture,”
“A gentleman has a good knowledge of righteousness,”
“A gentleman is broad-minded,”
“A gentleman takes morality as his bedrock,”
“Be true in word and resolute in deed,”
“If a man does not keep his word, what is he good for?”
“A man of high moral quality will never feel lonely,”
“The benevolent man loves others,”
“Do things for the good of others,”
“Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you,”
“Care for each other and help one another,”
“Respect others’ elders as one respects one’s own, and care for others’
children as one cares for one’s own,”
“Help the poor and assist those in difficulty,”
“Care less about quantity and more about quality.”

These thoughts and ideas all displayed and still demonstrate distinctive
national features, and have the indelible values of the times. We have
updated them in keeping abreast of the times, while carrying them forward
in an unbroken line. (Xi 2014b, 190)

Xi Jinping delivers here a barrage of aphorisms and traditional moral
precepts, and closes by emphasising their appropriateness to the current
situation of China. They generally express the prominence of self-
cultivation, morality, respect, benevolence, and solidarity: they typically
embody the idealistic facet of Confucianism epitomised by the Lunyu and the Mengzi, the texts from which 12 of these quotations are drawn. Besides
those upholding individual and social virtues, a small number of dictums
refer to the political sphere, but always from an individual or a social
perspective (min wei bang ben 民惟邦本, “The people are the foundation
of a state,” from the Shangshu, and tian xia xing wang, pi fu you ze 天下
兴亡，匹夫有责, “Everyone is responsible for their country’s rise or
fall,” from the Ri zhi lu).6

The more pragmatic facet of traditional thought is not altogether absent
from Xi’s speech. It appears in a quotation from the Guanzi:

“国有四维，礼义廉耻，四维不张，国乃灭亡。”这是中国先人对当时
核心价值观的认识。(Xi 2014a, 168)

In ancient China our ancestors developed core values highlighted by
“propriety, righteousness, honesty and a sense of shame—the four anchors
of our moral foundation, and a question of life and death for the country.”

6 Interestingly enough, the only two references to active intervention by the ruler
do not point directly to traditional sources, despite their classical-sounding form,
but seem rather to tap into contemporary political discourse. The notion of
“governing the country with virtue” (yi de zhi guo 以德治国, de 德 representing
the inner power that confers authority) echoes the principle of “exercising
government by virtue” (wei zheng yi de 为政以德) in the Lunyu, but is one of
former CPC General Secretary Jiang Zemin’s famous watchwords (Jiang 2001).
On the other hand, the principle of “educating the people with culture” (yi wen hua
ren 以文化人), also deeply rooted in a Confucian worldview, is attributed to Mao
Zedong (Huang 2010).
This was our ancestors’ understanding of their core values. (Xi 2014b, 190)

Although sometimes described as upholding a legalist viewpoint, the Guanzi has a less authoritarian tone than other works identified with the legalist tradition: in the book, “considerable importance is attached to traditional Confucian virtues,” and “a number of chapters present a blending of Legalist, Confucian, and Taoist doctrines” (Rickett 1993, 244). This passage seems to be presented as representative of a somewhat outdated conception of core values, leading to a reflection on the correspondence between another set of more appropriate traditional values (the “the three principles and eight objectives” examined above) and contemporary socialist tenets. Therefore, the reference to a text advocating more pragmatic views does not necessarily impact the general tone of the speech, which remains largely inspired by the more idealistic elements of Confucian ethics.

Considering the occasion and the audience, special prominence is also given to the importance of knowledge and education:

“学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆。” (Xi Jinping 2014a, 173)
As our ancestors believed, “Reading without thinking makes one muddled; thinking without reading makes one flighty.” (Xi Jinping 2014b, 193)

《礼记》中说：“博学之，审问之，慎思之，明辨之，笃行之。” (Xi 2014a, 174)
The Book of Rites says, “Learn extensively, inquire earnestly, think profoundly, discriminate clearly and practice sincerely.” (Xi Jinping 2014b, 194)

These quotations, from the Lunyu and the Zhongyong respectively, synthesise the basic precepts that young people should adopt in practicing core socialist values: diligent work, cultivation of morality and virtue—as

---

7 Legalism (fajia 法家) refers to a school of thought advocating the centrality of law and political pragmatism, epitomised by the thought of Shang Yang 商鞅 (390-338 BCE). However, the appropriateness of the term “legalism” translating fajia (which is itself a disputed label) as a hermeneutic category has been questioned by some scholars (Goldin 2011).

8 Nevertheless, such views seem to have made their way into Xi’s theoretical system, as quotations from the Han Feizi 韩非子—a text putting forward more pragmatic, if not autocratic, political precepts—as later speeches suggest (Mitchell 2015).
exemplified by the maxim *de zhe, ben ye* 德者，本也, “virtue is the root,” from the *Daxue* (Xi 2014a, 172-173)—ability to tell right from wrong, honesty and uprightness.

However, in order to realise the “Chinese dream” (*Zhongguo meng* 中国梦)—Xi Jinping’s signature slogan, which broadly embodies the idea of a collective effort towards the nation’s prosperity and revitalisation—youth needs direction. The confidence in the mainstays of the Party line—the socialist road, theories, and system—is then closely connected to the practice of core socialist values (Xi 2014a, 172), and must be upheld with the same determination shown by the bamboo in the couplet by Zheng Xie, one of Xi’s favourite quotations:

“千磨万击还坚劲, 任尔东南西北风” (Xi Jinping 2014a, 172)
“Standing firm when assailed by rain and wind from all directions” (Xi 2014b, 191)

In this perspective, the basic rules of individual behaviour derived from the traditional past allow the people of today’s China to achieve higher social and national objectives under the Party’s guidance.

### 3. The Ideological Implications of Intertextuality

The implications of Xi Jinping’s rhetorical use of intertextuality can be examined at various levels. Through this technique, Xi unmistakably aims at promoting his own image as a *junzi* 君子, the exemplary person in the Confucian tradition, whose actions are supported by the authority deriving from ancient wisdom, although, having grown up in the years of the Cultural Revolution (*Wenhua da geming* 文化大革命, 1966-1976), he could not possibly have received such a wide-ranging education in the classics, which were banished at the time (Scarpari 2015a, 164-165). Far from being a mere display of erudition, proficiency in the classics equates to moral irreproachability, which in turn provides political legitimacy, due to the intimate connection between personal cultivation and political authority throughout the history of China (Link 2013, 308-309). In the specific case examined, the educational background of an audience—the students and teachers of Peking University—able to grasp the multiple layers of meaning in Xi’s numerous quotations makes this operation all the more effective, testifying to Xi’s familiarity with the conative function of intertextuality. Incidentally, it is useful to remember that the rhythmic features that characterise traditional forms of expression and are widely
Putting into Practice “Core Confucian Values”

Putting into Practice “Core Confucian Values”

observable in contemporary political language as well combine to lend a sense of authority, “fitness,” and truth to the message (Link 2013, 89, 103).

Furthermore, this practice can be seen as a form of “S-ideology”—based on solidarity, as opposed to “P-solidarity,” based on power—aiming to create intimacy and cohesion and reduce the distance between the governor and the governed (Hodge and Louie 1998, 51). Stimulated by well chosen quotations from the classics that are largely comprehensible to the general public, the shared pride in a revered cultural tradition allows Xi Jinping to rally the nation around a set of time-honoured “core values.” This operation is reflected in the constant emphasis on the unbroken connection between traditional and contemporary ethics, which are cultivated individually but become in turn norms of conduct applicable at the social and national level. In Xi’s conceptual perspective, these ideals “inherit the essence of the outstanding traditional Chinese culture,” being “a combination of requirements for the country, society and citizens, which represent the nature of socialism [and] carry forward the fine traditional Chinese culture” (Xi 2014b, 188). Furthermore, as clearly stated by the General Secretary, it is in the force of these tenets, not in foreign models, that the confidence necessary to realise the “Chinese Dream” lies. By means of this form of S-ideology, the leadership creates unity around a shared core of principles, forging a powerful tool to counter the ethical void brought about by the excesses of a market economy, and providing at the same time a powerful tool against shrinking ideological support.

These considerations lead to a number of further consequences at the ideological level. Firstly, the discourse on the persistence of traditional values, conveniently supported by intertextual references, suggests an original connection between the Confucian ethical model, the May Fourth spirit, and present-day ideology. Xi’s speech, especially in the opening section, celebrates the patriotic spirit of the May Fourth Movement, “which embodies the values the Chinese people and nation have pursued in modern history” (Xi 2014b, p. 187). Such values, the argumentation implies, also overlap significantly with the same core values that inspired Confucian ethics, and are still applicable today. Consequently, the subversive, iconoclastic, individualistic, anti-traditional (especially anti-Confucian) and Westernophile components of the May Fourth Movement are played down in favour of ineradicable Confucian virtues. Moreover, the Movement is implicitly presented as a historical phase that inherits traditional values and lays the groundwork for the “Chinese Dream.” This operation appears then as a contemporary form of nalaizhuyi 拿来主义,
“grabbism” or “borrowism,” although it is “more about excluding inconvenient traditions and parts of the past than experimenting with different schools of thought,” as was intended by Lu Xun, who first coined the word (Eriksson 2014).

The reinstatement of Confucianism also seems to be part of a far-reaching ideological project that aims to tone down the Western-derived components of socialist ideology and replace them with native, traditional elements. As is the case with the May Fourth spirit, the virulently anti-traditional essence of socialism itself is glossed over, as is the fact that the CPC had long sought its legitimacy in modernisation, not tradition (Minzner 2014). The attempted eradication of Confucianism in the Maoist era is also obliterated altogether in Xi’s discourse. Conversely, the idea of the Party as inheritor and promoter of traditional culture had already been expressed by Hu Jintao (Xinhuawang 2011) but has become orthodoxy under Xi, who repeated verbatim Hu’s words upon visiting Qufu, the birthplace of Confucius, in 2013 (Ta Kung Pao 2014). Thus, the Confucian canon becomes a useful tool with which to affirm the role of national culture in shaping socialism and to present the former as the root of the Party and its legitimacy.

Finally, the assertion of the superiority of national to imported values, supported by references to the Confucian corpus, seems to anticipate the campaign against Western values in university education launched in January 2015. Following Xi’s call for the authorities to improve ideological work, the Minister of Education Yuan Guiren 袁贵仁 urged firmer management of textbooks upholding Western views (Xinhuawang 2015). This operation reflects the move to reclaim tradition and lessen the influence of certain foreign categories, which are hardly applicable—when not harmful, as in the notion of “democracy”—to Chinese ideological discourse.

4. Conclusions

Quoting classical sources, a long-standing practice in Chinese political communication, has become a trademark feature of Xi Jinping’s discursive project, as can be observed in the pervasive references to traditional—mainly Confucian—philosophical texts made by Xi in the speech used herein as a case study. This use of intertextual devices has a number of immediate consequences, the most apparent being to identify the General Secretary with the traditional Confucian man of virtue, well versed in the classics and therefore morally irreprehensible. It can also be observed that
Putting into Practice “Core Confucian Values”

Traditional culture serves as a cohesive and unifying force, rallying the nation around a set of national virtues and paradigms of behaviour elaborated by Confucian thought and codified in a specific textual corpus. The idea of an unbroken continuity between traditional ethics and contemporary virtues is also corroborated by convenient references to the Chinese intellectual heritage, to its persistence and modernity: intertextuality is used to support the “core values” discourse, a mainstay of Xi’s official rhetoric, because such values are portrayed as indelible tenets, elaborated in the past but still relevant today. The implications of such a technique run even deeper: in this specific discursive context, constant reference to tradition also serves to emphasise the Confucian ideal of “harmony”—especially since the Hu Jintao era, this broad term designates a more balanced socio-economic model aiming to reduce inequalities that may lead to unrest—over the subversive elements of the May Fourth Movement and Maoism, as well as to reassert the native origins of socialism and the relevance of native ideological categories as opposed to imported ones.

The force of tradition, embodied by the worldview expressed in classical texts, allows the Chinese leadership to carry out a far-reaching operation: under Xi Jinping, the ethical values of Confucianism are fused together with the ideological backbone of Maoism and the liberalism introduced by Deng Xiaoping, shaping a unique form of syncretic ideology. This innovative conceptual system attempts to provide an antidote against the ethical and existential repercussions of a free market economy, as well as to use pride in a common heritage in order to counter the drop in the ideological support for the CPC. Moreover, by virtue of the non-contradictory coexistence of idealism and pragmatism in Confucian thought, references to the canon can easily be exploited to promote an ethical model that stresses virtue and self-cultivation, but also the strict observance of discipline and socio-political order (Scarpari 2015b, 109-110). In the final analysis, the reassertion of the Confucian model of individual (including pedagogical), social, and national norms of conduct serves a specific purpose: shaping future citizens who have confidence in the socialist system and in the guidance of the Party—socialism carrying forward, in Xi’s ideological construct, the essence of traditional culture, and the CPC being the major heir and promoter of the same traditional heritage.
Chapter Eleven

References


Li, She 李社. 2015. “Xi Jinping jianghua zhong de guyu mingyan 习近平讲话中的古语名言.” 理论与当代 3: 57-64.


Lin, Huiying 林辉映. 2014. “Bu shuo shengci ai (yan) suyu. Xi Jinping
“jianghua yinwen shangxi 不说生词爱(谚)俗语——习近平讲话引文赏析．” 中学政治（教学参考）1-2: 89-90.


Liu, Jin 刘进. 2013. “*Lun Xi Jinping jianghua de huayuli 论习近平讲话的话语力*” 武汉理工大学学报（社会科学版）26 no. 4: 569-573.

Ma, Zhong 马忠 and Shuanggen Li 李双根, 2014. “Xi Jinping de wenfeng shijian ji dui dangqian qunzhong luxian huayu zhuanbian de jiazhi 习近平的文风实践及对当前群众路线话语转变的价值．” 广西社会科学 2: 1-5.


Wen, Xiu 文秀. 2014. “*Xi Jinping jianghua de yuyan fengge ji tedian 习近平讲话的语言风格及特点．*” 理论导报 1: 6-8.

Xi, Jinping 习近平. 2014a. “*Qingnian yao zijue jianxing shehuizhuyi hexin jizhiguan 青年要自觉践行社会主义核心价值观．*” In *Xi Jinping tan zhiguo lizheng 习近平谈治国理政．* 北京：外文出版社, 166-179.


