

Rationalized Paternalism: Structuring Chinese Moral Education

Greg Fairbrother
Department of Social Sciences
June 21, 2011

The research on which this presentation is based was funded by a Competitive Earmarked Research grant (HKIEd 7424/05H) from the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong

Claiming Legitimacy

- States claim legitimacy
 - Conveyed to citizens through political socialization and education
- Multiple legitimacy claims
 - Ideology
 - Economic growth
 - Attention to social problems
 - Rule by law
 - Administrative capacity
 - Rights promotion
 - International prestige

Legitimacy as Paternalism

- “Umbrella,” “Omnibus,” Comprehensive claims
- Claim about the character of the state
- An omnibus legitimacy claim on the basis of the Chinese state’s character: Paternalism
 - Confucian-Legalist origin
 - Late-Imperial (1600s-1911)
 - Republican period (1912-1949)
 - Communist Party (1930s – present)

Paternalism

- The state is both
 - Strong and strict
 - Kind and compassionate
- The state is concerned for, and able to provide for citizens'
 - Material well-being
 - Subsistence or development
 - Spiritual well-being
 - Societal harmony
 - Establishing the moral tone and direction for society

Paternalism and Moral Education

- Chinese governance entails the moral education of the people
 - The act of promoting moral education demonstrates paternalism
 - Displays the state's concern for citizens' spiritual well-being
 - Moral Education content conveys the state's more specific legitimacy claims
- Rule by Morality 以德治国
 - Moral-civic-ideological-political education

Paternalism as an Institution

- Moralistic paternalism is institutionalized
 - Set of taken-for-granted cultural rules about
 - Identity of the Chinese state
 - Nature of good governance
 - Relationship between the state and citizens
 - A standardized cultural account: paternalistic governance
 - Each Chinese state has conformed to these rules
 - Legitimacy of different states is claimed on the basis of
 - Conformity to the institution
 - Distinguishing specific claims within the institution

At the same time ...

Rationality

- Institutional isomorphism
 - Conformity to Rule by Morality
 - Conformity to rationality institutionalized in the world political system
 - Chinese states have attempted to rationalize governance and administration
 - A long bureaucratic tradition
 - Rationalization accelerated with increasing engagement with the outside world
 - » Especially since 1978: Reform and Openness

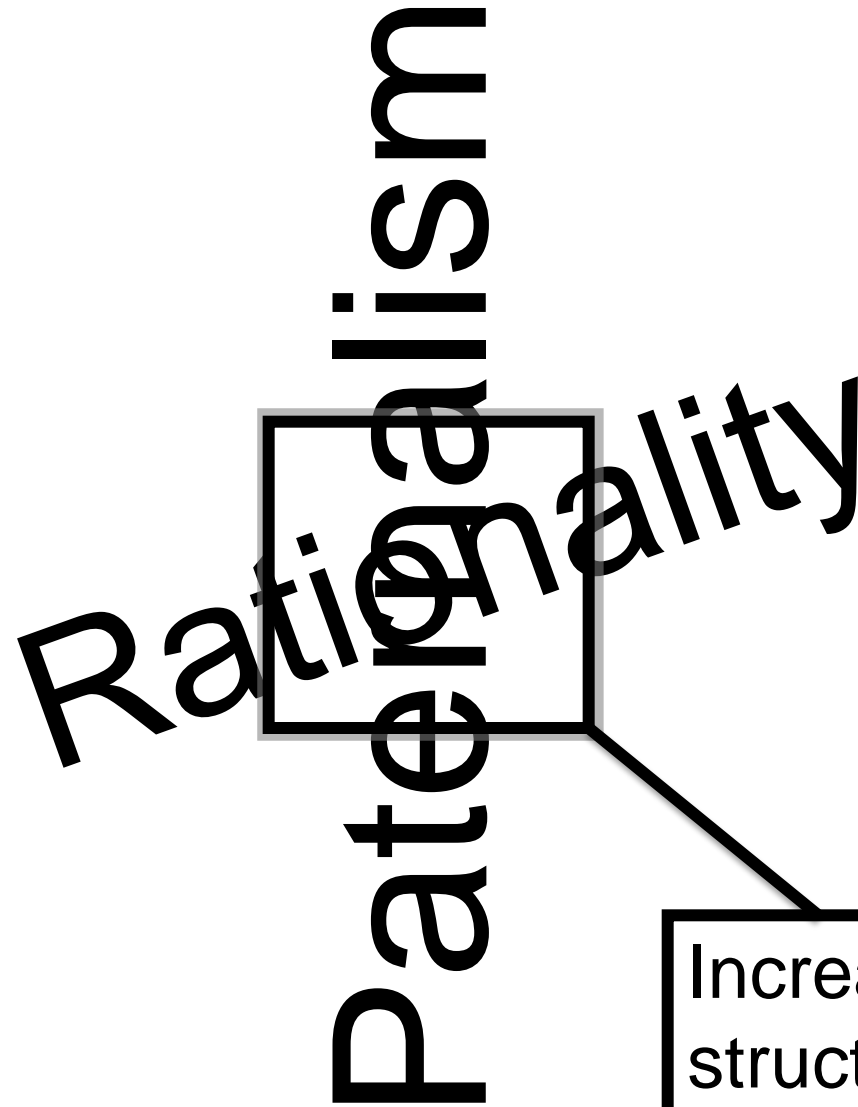
Rationalization

- Formal hierarchical structures of leadership and authority
- Clear functional division of labor among differentiated and specialized administrative units
- Administrative activities governed by formal rules, regulations, and standards
- Administrative tasks carried out by trained specialists
- Activities and personnel subject to supervision, control, monitoring, and evaluation
- Expected outcomes: standardized, efficient, effective implementation of policies and tasks

Rationality and Legitimacy

- Rationality contributes to legitimacy claims
 - Perception of the state as rationally structured
 - In conformity with other legitimized states worldwide
 - Perception that rationalized administration leads to more efficient and effective policy implementation

Rationalism
Paternalism
Rationality



Increasingly
structured moral
education

Paternalism + Rationality

- Moral education from the late-Qing to the early Maoist period exhibited certain, but limited, features of rationalization
 - Central-level direction
 - Regulations for its delivery
 - Standardization
 - Delivered by specialized personnel
 - Subject to supervision and monitoring

Maoist Period (1949-1976)

- Some elements of rationalized moral-political education, but
 - Anti-rationalization, anti-bureaucracy political sentiment
 - Extracurricular political education campaigns
 - Constantly changing course titles and content
 - Lack of concrete standards
 - Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)
 - Moral education = Mao's writings
 - Cessation of textbook publication
 - Near decimation of the teaching force

Reform Period Administrative Rationalization

- From class struggle to economic development
- Rationalization and regularity in administration for
 - China's reintegration into the international economic community
 - Rationalized administrative structures
 - Strengthened legal system
 - Laws and regulations
 - Domestic concerns
 - Social stability and improved livelihoods
 - Protection from official arbitrariness
 - More effective policy implementation

Reform Period Rationalization of Moral Education

- Hierarchical structures of leadership and authority
 - Decentralization (loose coupling)
 - Central-level leadership
 - Moral education directives
 - Framing the need for moral education
 - Provincial and lower levels
 - Implementation
- Clear functional division of labor
 - Guidance Committee on Developing Spiritual Civilization
 - Ministry of Education
 - Etc.

Reform Period Rationalization of Moral Education

- Administrative activities governed by formal rules, regulations, and standards
 - 1994 Action Plan for Patriotic Education
 - 1998 Moral Education Regulations
 - 2004 Opinions on Developing Morality among Minors
 - School subject curriculum standards
- Trained specialists
 - Moral education teacher training
 - Regulations for teachers' professional ethics

Reform Period Rationalization of Moral Education

- Activities and personnel subject to supervision, control, monitoring, and evaluation
 - 2008 Evaluation System for the Development of Ideology and Morality among Minors
- Expected outcomes: standardized, efficient, effective implementation of policies and tasks
 - ????????

Paternalism, Rationalization, Loose Coupling, Tight Coupling

- Central state demonstration of paternalism
 - Legitimacy +
- Rationalized structures
 - Legitimacy +
 - Buffer the state from weakness in implementation
- Loose coupling / decentralization: Legitimacy promotion
 - Questions about effective implementation
- Tight coupling: Legitimacy defense
 - Textbook publication according to strict guidelines
 - Special Regulation and Management of Internet Service

Rationalized Paternalism: Structuring Chinese Moral Education

Greg Fairbrother
Department of Social Sciences
June 21, 2011

The research on which this presentation is based was funded by a Competitive Earmarked Research grant (HKIEd 7424/05H) from the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong