

# The Formation Logic, Scientific Connotation and Contemporary Value of Xi Jinping's Conceptualization of Family Values

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## ABSTRACT

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has elevated family tradition construction to a new height in national governance and elaborated on family traditions on multiple occasions, thereby forming a systematic view on family values. Xi Jinping's View on Family Values is generated from the theoretical logic of the Marxist view on the family, the historical logic of the essence of fine traditional Chinese family culture, and the practical logic of family traditions of the older generation of revolutionaries, shining with the brilliant light of the contemporary spirit of China's family tradition construction. On the new journey of building the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in all respects, the View on Family Values proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping is of great and far-reaching significance. Thoroughly studying and practicing Xi Jinping's View on Family Values carries extraordinary value for fostering individual values in the new era, fostering a clean and upright social atmosphere, and promoting national prosperity and strength.

**Keywords:** *Xi Jinping's View on Family Values, Generative logic, Scientific connotation and contemporary value.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historical development is marked by the succession of eras. As people inherit the means of production left by their predecessors, they also inherit the valuable intellectual resources of previous generations[1]. There can be no innovation without inheritance, and no development without innovation. Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is an epoch-making achievement that takes the Marxist worldview and methodology as its theoretical guidance, is grounded in the great practices of our times, and advances with the times through constant innovation. The same holds true for Xi Jinping's views on family values. It represents an enrichment and development of the Marxist view on the family, as well as an inheritance and advancement of the essence of fine traditional Chinese family culture and the family values of the older generation of Chinese Communists. It embodies profound theoretical, historical, and practical logic.

## 2. THE GENERATIVE LOGIC OF XI JINPING'S VIEW ON FAMILY VALUES

### 2.1 Theoretical Logic: The Marxist View on the Family Provides the Theoretical Origin for the Formation of Xi Jinping's View on Family Values

In accordance with Marxist historical materialism, the emergence of any scientific ideology or theory is rooted in a profound era-specific background: "they all came into being in response to the needs of the times in which these systems arose." [2]<sup>P507</sup> Such needs essentially stem from the practical demands of people's lives, the need to solve the problems of the era, and the imperative to advance the development of the times and social progress. Meanwhile, regarding the formation and development of any scientific ideology or theory, "it must first start from the existing ideological materials, even though its roots

are deeply embedded in material and economic facts." [3]<sup>P523</sup> The Marxist view on the family is an important component of the entire Marxist doctrine. In numerous works, articles, and letters such as *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Marx and Engels put forward relevant ideas. Marx held that "at a certain stage of development in production, exchange, and consumption, there will be a corresponding social system and a corresponding form of family." In other words, the family, as a specific social organization, changes along with social changes and develops alongside social development, and "is a product of the social system." He analyzed the respective responsibilities and obligations that parents and children should undertake within the family. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels dissected the duties that fathers, mothers, and children should each fulfill in the family, and pointed out the important role of women in family life. Their fundamental ideas provide an important theoretical basis for the formation of Xi Jinping's view on family values and supply ideological nourishment for Xi Jinping to profoundly expound on family values from the forefront of the times.

Xi Jinping's view on family values fully draws on the cultural genes of the Marxist view on the family and proceeds from the reality of Chinese families. In a collective talk with members of the new leading body of the All-China Women's Federation, he pointed out that only when thousands upon thousands of families maintain fine family traditions, enjoy harmonious family atmospheres, and provide sound education for their children can social morality have a solid foundation. He attaches great importance to the educational role of parents towards their children, believing that while educating their children, parents should attach equal importance to words and deeds, as well as to responsibility and action, so as to set good examples for their children. Moreover, sound social morality is closely linked to fine family traditions. In addition, he emphasized the important role of women in the family structure, noting that women should be guided to give full play to their unique role in carrying forward fine traditional Chinese virtues and fostering good family traditions, which is inseparable from the healthy growth and success of the younger generation. It can be seen that the basic ideas of Marx and Engels in the Marxist view on the family—such as the essence of the family and the relationship between the family and

society—are fully reflected in Xi Jinping's view on family values. Adhering to the principle of seeking truth from facts and integrating the characteristics of the times, Xi Jinping has offered a new interpretation of the Marxist view on the family. The Marxist view on the family provides ideological guidance for Xi Jinping's view on family values.

## ***2.2 Historical Logic: Fine Traditional Chinese Culture Provides Historical Nourishment for the Formation of Xi Jinping's View on Family Values***

The Chinese nation has valued family and family bonds since ancient times. As an ancient saying goes: "The foundation of the world lies in the family." The concept of "family" is indeed a core category. As the renowned scholar Liang Shuming observed, family culture is the core and ethical foundation of Chinese culture; mastering "family" culture is key to understanding traditional Chinese culture. Fine traditional Chinese family values are rich in content, encompassing harmonious family relations, diligence and frugality, honesty and integrity, self-cultivation, and moral restraint.

Xi Jinping's view on family values inherits the essence of fine traditional Chinese family culture. In *The Governance of China Vol. II*, General Secretary Xi Jinping discusses the relationship between the individual and the family, family education, and family traditions, emphasizing the "educational function" of family traditions. "The family is life's first classroom." "The family is not merely a physical dwelling but a spiritual home. Good family traditions lead to a prosperous and harmonious family; bad ones inevitably bring ruin to descendants and harm to society." Accordingly, parents, as a child's first teachers, play a crucial role in shaping, nurturing, and improving their children. They must help their children "button the first button in life and take the first step on life's journey", teaching them gratitude and reciprocity. In the process of striving for personal growth and societal prosperity, children should elevate their spiritual realm and cultivate noble character.

Xi Jinping's view on family values inherits the quintessence of traditional Chinese culture, but such inheritance is not mere imitation. It adheres to the principle of "weeding through the old to bring forth the new and reforming the old to establish the new". After scientific sublimation, it takes China's

reality as the foundation and serves its own purposes.

### ***2.3 Practical Logic: The Ideology of Revolutionary Family Traditions Provides Practical Guidance for the Formation of Xi Jinping's View on Family Values***

The older generation of proletarian revolutionaries such as Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai held firm Marxist beliefs and lofty revolutionary ideals. In the course of their struggle for the founding of New China and the development and progress of the country, they formed distinctive red family traditions. For example, Comrade Mao Zedong attached great importance to the construction of family traditions and formulated the family precept of "bearing hardships, seeking knowledge, making progress, and forging ahead"[9]. He also put forward the "three principles for treating relatives" that opposed special privileges[10]. Whether in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region or on the battlefield to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, Mao Anying, at the age of 28, was deeply influenced by his father Mao Zedong. He feared no sacrifice and always took the lead, fully embodying the fine family tradition of integrity and righteousness. Zhou Enlai's family precept was "remaining indifferent to fame and fortune and practicing selfless dedication". With profound implications in simple words, it is not only a model of personal conduct, but also a guide for ethical norms. It is clear that the older generation of revolutionaries not only fulfilled their duties loyally to the Party and the country, but also closely integrated children's education and family tradition construction with national development. These pioneers set an excellent example for building harmonious, incorruptible, and healthy families.

The important expositions on Xi Jinping's view on family values uphold the original aspiration of the older generation of revolutionaries. The ideals pursued by revolutionary predecessors throughout their lives represent the original aspiration and mission of Communists, namely, seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation, which is also an essential connotation of the Chinese Dream[12]. In his speech at the meeting with representatives of the First National Civilized Families, Xi Jinping stressed that it is necessary to "inherit and carry forward the red family traditions of revolutionary

predecessors, learn from Comrades Jiao Yulu, Yang Shanzhou, and other role models, set an example in the construction of family traditions, and earnestly implement self-cultivation and family governance"[11]. Obviously, General Secretary Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the fine family traditions of the older generation of revolutionaries. He calls on people from all walks of life to inherit and carry forward red family values, act as upright and incorruptible examples, educate their children soundly, and fulfill loyalty to the country and filial piety to the family.

## **3. THE SCIENTIFIC CONNOTATION OF XI JINPING'S VIEW ON FAMILY VALUES**

The term "family tradition" (家风), also known as "family ethos" (门风), originated in the Western Han Dynasty. It refers to the values, lifestyle, and behavioral habits that a family or clan gradually accumulates and continuously enriches and develops through the alternation and evolution of society. It serves as the spiritual pillar that maintains the sound functioning of the family. Family traditions can be positive or negative. A good family tradition fosters a positive and uplifting mental outlook among its members and provides them with immense spiritual strength, and vice versa. In December 2016, when meeting with representatives of the first National Civilized Families, Xi Jinping emphasized that the whole society should extensively participate in the spiritual civilization construction of families, and urged to "cultivate a new socialist trend of family civilization featuring patriotism and love for the family, mutual affection and love, striving for progress and virtue, and joint contribution and shared benefits"[13]. Obviously, Xi Jinping has highly summarized the scientific connotation of his view on family traditions and expounded its essence.

### ***3.1 Patriotism and Love for the Family Are the Core Values of the View on Family Values in the New Era***

Home refers to both individual families and the nation as a whole. With patriotism and love for the family as its core value, the view on family values in the New Era embodies a high degree of alignment between traditional value pursuits and the modern core socialist values. Looking back over thousands of years of Chinese civilization, the nation has always attached great importance to the

family. Based on blood ties and kinship, the family nurtures everyone's growth, holds their deepest longing, provides boundless strength, and serves as the lifelong destination for all. In the traditional Chinese mindset, the family is a mini-nation, and the nation is a grand family composed of tens of millions of households. Every Chinese heart is filled with a profound patriotic sentiment.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has profoundly pointed out: "Only when every family prospers can the nation thrive, and only when the nation prospers can families thrive"[13]<sup>P354</sup>. The family is a vital component of the nation. Only a harmonious family can achieve prosperity, which in turn contributes to a flourishing nation and a strong country. Therefore, we must advocate love for family members, parents, and relatives, voluntarily assume family responsibilities and obligations, and contribute the strength of tens of millions of households to the prosperity of the nation. Furthermore, a strong and prosperous nation serves as the fundamental guarantee for family harmony.

Looking back, countless revolutionary martyrs, driven by profound patriotism, shed blood and sacrificed their lives to achieve national liberation, enabling us to live in a stable society today. Subsequently, generations of Chinese Communists, with courage and bold exploration, blazed a path of development that led the nation to prosperity. To realize national rejuvenation in the New Era, we still need to be sustained by the national spirit with patriotism at its core and the spirit of the times with reform and innovation at its core, and continue to strive courageously.

To this end, Xi Jinping has emphasized the need to strengthen patriotic education, guide people to foster a correct outlook on family and nation, and urged that "all families should integrate love for family with patriotism, and embed the realization of family dreams into the national dream"[13]<sup>P354</sup>. Individual families are the main arena for patriotic education. Guided by patriotism and love for family, there is a must to cultivate a sense of responsibility, mission, and belonging toward both family and nation. Through fine family traditions rooted in patriotism and love for family, people are educated to link their personal future and destiny with that of the motherland and nation, consciously shoulder family and social responsibilities, and contribute to the realization of national rejuvenation.

### ***3.2 Mutual Affection Among Family Members Is an Important Embodiment of Fine Family Traditions in the New Era***

Love, the noblest of all human emotions[14], serves as a bond for spiritual communication among family members and a vital foundation for the stable development of society. People's kindness and affection are rooted in family love. Cultivating a family tradition of mutual love and affection allows family members to be imperceptibly influenced by the love of their kin, fostering in them the ability to love themselves and others in daily life, study, and work.

General Secretary Xi Jinping highly values the cultivation of a loving and harmonious family atmosphere. Despite his busy schedule, he always finds time to walk and chat with his family. He has also repeatedly urged officials and the general public to "spend more time at home with family", noting that this not only contributes to improving Party conduct and upholding integrity but also helps create a warm family environment. A family tradition of mutual love and affection purifies the heart, nourishes society, and jointly forges a warm and harmonious social atmosphere.

### ***3.3 Striving for Progress and Virtue Is the Value Orientation of Fine Family Traditions in the New Era***

To strive for progress means to forge ahead toward higher goals. It embodies the aspiration to aim high, serving as an incentive for people to advance. Only by setting aspirations can one have direction and goals. Aspiration is the starting point for one's career success upon entering society. As an ancient saying goes, 'Where there is a will, there is a way.' While not all ambitious people may succeed, those without ambition will surely fail. Aspiration marks the beginning of life, and the breadth of one's ambition determines the scale of one's achievements. Just as the saying goes, 'How can a sparrow comprehend the ambition of a swan?' The ultimate outcomes of the two are as distinct as the sky from the earth.

Since ancient times, many in China have attached great importance to fostering family precepts of striving for progress. For instance, Zhuge Liang wrote in *Advice to My Nephew*, 'One should cherish lofty aspirations.' Cultivating in children the noble character of setting great

ambitions from an early age has been a vital part of numerous family rules and precepts. Since the advent of the new era, amid new circumstances, changes, and dimensions, the lofty ideal and common ideal of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups have been endowed with new contemporary connotations. That is, on the basis of inheriting the fine family tradition of aspiring to progress, it is necessary to uphold the lofty ideal of communism and the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Xi Jinping pointed out: "Ideals and convictions are the pillars for the progress of a country and a nation. When the people have faith, a nation has hope." "The Chinese Dream is the shared ideal of all ethnic groups in China and the lofty ideal that the young generation should firmly uphold." [15]<sup>P39</sup> As the starting point of life and the cradle of ideals and convictions, fine family traditions of striving for progress in the new era should enable everyone to cherish not only personal and family dreams but also embrace the Chinese Dream shared by all ethnic groups with a positive and upward attitude.

To aspire to virtue means to harbor kindness and do what is beneficial to oneself, others, and society. It embodies the value of upholding morality and pursuing goodness. To aspire to virtue is to maintain a kind heart, perform deeds that benefit the country and the people, truly center on the people, adhere to development for the people, by the people, and with the people sharing its fruits, and serve the people wholeheartedly. To uphold morality is to esteem and abide by moral norms.

Striving for progress and aspiring to virtue are complementary and indispensable. Aspiring to virtue is the foundation and guarantee for striving for progress, while striving for progress is the goal of aspiring to virtue. In his essay *Reflections on Choosing a Profession*, Marx stated that a person is noble only when he chooses a career that serves humanity and works for the happiness of the majority. The educational role of family traditions oriented toward progress and virtue provides rich moral nourishment for individuals, thereby fostering a favorable social atmosphere of honoring morality.

#### **4. THE CONTEMPORARY VALUE OF XI JINPING'S VIEW ON FAMILY VALUES**

Family values not only determine the rise and fall of a single clan, but also bear on the future and

destiny of a nation. With extraordinary foresight and a holistic grasp of the overall situation, General Secretary Xi Jinping, standing at the strategic height of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, has emphatically stressed that for a country and nation, the functions and roles of the family are irreplaceable. He has clearly articulated the contemporary value of family values in fostering individual values, cultivating a clean and upright social atmosphere, and bolstering national prosperity and strength.

#### **4.1 *The Strategic First Step in the Cultivation of Personal Values***

"The foundation of the world lies in the state, and the foundation of the state lies in the family." Family tradition culture has always been an essential part of fine traditional Chinese culture. Due to differences in living regions and behavioral customs, different clans form distinctive family traditions. Sound family culture plays a vital role in shaping individual values, helping people establish a correct view of family and nation as well as a rational national outlook, so as to become talents who can contribute to their families, society, and the country. On the contrary, unhealthy family traditions exert adverse impacts on the shaping of personal values, leading to an ordinary and unfulfilling life that ought to have been splendid.

A family is a miniature nation, and a nation is an extended family. One's growth and success are not only related to the rise and fall of a clan, but also bear on the long-term development of the nation. Therefore, in setting life goals, individuals should take into account not only their own destiny, but also the future of the country. Young people are the hope of families and the future of the nation. As the starting point of ideological enlightenment, the family is where most people receive their first life education, exerting the most original influence on the formation and development of individual values. In the current context, teenagers should be guided and educated by families to uphold the lofty ideal of communism and the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics. They are encouraged to connect personal dreams with the future and destiny of the country, adhere to the principle of "aspiring to high ideals, cultivating great morality, developing outstanding capabilities, and shouldering important responsibilities", and strive unremittingly for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

#### **4.2 *The Nourishing Injection for a Clean and Upright Social Ethos***

Xi Jinping's exposition on family values profoundly reveals the laws governing family tradition construction in the New Era, particularly its close connection with leading officials and Party members. In Xi's view, "For leading officials, a good family tradition bears not only on their own families but also on the conduct of the Party and the government" [16]. The conduct of Party members and leading officials is a matter of paramount importance, one that concerns the people's support and the very survival of the Party. The root cause of official corruption, graft, and law-breaking lies in problems with family traditions. Therefore, fostering sound family traditions is conducive to cultivating a clean and upright political ecosystem. Xi Jinping's outlook on family traditions highlights the intrinsic link between the construction of Party integrity and family tradition building in the New Era, serving as a nourishing injection for achieving political integrity.

On the one hand, family traditions influence the conduct of the Party. Xi Jinping's important expositions on family traditions have transcended the traditional concept of family values, elevating them to a new height of national governance. Leveraging the inherent connection between family traditions and Party conduct, the behavior of Party members and leading officials is taken as a key measure of family tradition construction. Xi Jinping's outlook on family traditions has enriched the theoretical content of Party conduct building. Although family tradition and party conduct building may seem unrelated, they are intrinsically linked. As full and rigorous Party self-governance continues to deepen, numerous cases have shown that official corruption and bribery are directly related to weak family tradition construction. Xi Jinping has analyzed the inherent relationship between family tradition and Party conduct building, supervising the behavior of responsible parties from a new perspective and opening up new horizons.

On the other hand, family traditions shape government conduct. Good family traditions among Party members and officials can rally the support of the Party and the people. Good family traditions foster good party conduct, which in turn promotes sound government conduct. Therefore, Xi Jinping's outlook on family traditions is of great significance for purifying the root of governance and building a law-based government.

#### **4.3 *The Booster for National Prosperity and Strength***

The integration of prospering the family and strengthening the country is a theoretical hallmark of Xi Jinping's important expositions on family traditions and family education [18]. Xi Jinping profoundly expounds the principle of "family and nation as an integral whole," noting that the fundamental to "governing a country" lies in "managing a family well." Guided by the goal of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, he calls on society as a whole to value the family, family education, and family traditions, so as to foster an honest folk custom and guide social conduct, providing strong spiritual impetus for achieving our common ideal. Truth-guided practice yields twice the result with half the effort. As an important part of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, Xi Jinping's outlook on family traditions serves as an action guide for securing the great victory of socialism with Chinese characteristics and a "booster" to help all Chinese sons and daughters realize national rejuvenation.

On the one hand, fine family traditions cultivate an honest folk custom. As the basic unit of folk custom, family traditions exert an invisible, imperceptible influence that nurtures all things silently. Educating the people and regulating behavior are two vital functions of family traditions. From the perspective of individual families, good or bad family traditions directly determine a family's rise and fall; from the perspective of society as a whole, they directly shape social conduct. In contemporary society, large extended families in the traditional sense are gradually disappearing amid social development. With a keen insight into the overarching trend and an accurate grasp of the laws of development, Xi Jinping's outlook on family traditions proceeds from China's actual family conditions and articulates the vision of family traditions in the New Era in plain language, making it more accessible to the general public.

On the other hand, family traditions influence social conduct. Society is composed of thousands upon thousands of individual families, which are the cells of society. As Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized, "Only when family traditions are good in thousands upon thousands of families can social conduct be sound" [19]. In modern society, people face mounting social pressure. The family serves not only as a physical shelter but also as a haven to

relieve various pressures and rest the mind. A sound family environment nurtures moral character, enabling individuals to face challenges calmly and alleviate stress. The family is the foundation of society, and fine family traditions serve as a beacon for social conduct. A good family tradition not only benefits individuals for life but also influences other families, jointly fostering a sound social atmosphere.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

### 5.1 Conclusion

This paper takes Xi Jinping's view on family values as the research object, and systematically explains its generative logic, scientific connotation, and contemporary value, forming a relatively complete theoretical analysis framework. Research shows that Xi Jinping's view on family values is not groundless, but has a profound theoretical foundation, historical heritage, and practical support. Theoretically, it takes the Marxist view on the family as its origin; historically, it inherits the essence of China's excellent traditional family culture; and practically, it inherits the experience of the revolutionary traditions of the older generation of revolutionaries, thus realizing the internal unity of the theoretical logic, historical logic, and practical logic.

At the level of scientific connotation, Xi Jinping's view on family values takes patriotism and love for the family, mutual affection and harmony, striving for progress and aspiring to virtue, and joint contribution and shared benefits as its core essence. It clearly defines the value core, emotional foundation, spiritual orientation, and practical principles of family values in the New Era. It not only continues the cultural gene of "the family and the country as an integral whole", but also conforms to the core socialist values in the New Era, providing a fundamental guideline for family values construction.

At the level of contemporary value, Xi Jinping's view on family values has multi-level and all-round important significance: it is the crucial first step in cultivating individual values, laying a solid moral foundation for the growth of young people; it is the nourishing injection for fostering a clean and upright social atmosphere, providing important support for purifying the political ecosystem and improving social conduct; it is the booster for national prosperity and strength, gathering the

powerful strength of thousands of families to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Overall, based on the overall situation of governance in the new era, Xi Jinping's View on Family Values elevates family construction to a strategic height related to national development, national rejuvenation, and social harmony. As an important part of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, it is theoretical, practical, and epochal, and has far-reaching significance for promoting family civilization construction, social governance innovation, and the improvement of Party conduct and a clean government.

### 5.2 Outlook

Standing at a new starting point to comprehensively promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese modernization, the importance of family values construction has become increasingly prominent, and the theoretical value and practical effectiveness of Xi Jinping's view on family values will continue to be released.

The first is to continue to deepen theoretical research and constantly improve systematic interpretation. In the future, people should further strengthen theoretical research on Xi Jinping's view on family values, deeply explore its ideological origin, core essence, and practical path, and promote more systematic and in-depth theoretical results to provide more solid theoretical support for family civilization construction.

The second is to promote the normalization of family values education and integrate it into the national education system. Fully integrate family values construction into family education, school education, and social education, focus on carrying out education on family-country affection, moral quality, and responsibility for young people, guide young people to "aspire to high ideals, cultivate great morality, develop outstanding capabilities, and shoulder important responsibilities", and grow into new citizens of the era who can shoulder the important task of national rejuvenation.

The third is to strengthen the demonstration and leading role of Party members and cadres, and cultivate Party conduct and government conduct with family values. It is necessary to continue to give play to the exemplary role of leading officials and Party members, take family values construction as an important part of comprehensively and strictly governing the Party, build a strong line of defense

against corruption and degeneration with honest family values, and drive the continuous improvement of Party conduct, government conduct, and social conduct with fine family values.

The fourth is to promote the innovative development of family values construction and serve the overall situation of national governance. There is a must to conform to the new changes in social structure and family forms, promote the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional family culture, adapt fine family values to modern social governance, integrate family dreams into the national dream, and provide lasting and profound spiritual impetus for national prosperity, national rejuvenation, and people's happiness through the harmonious endeavor of thousands of families.

On the new journey of the New Era, in-depth study and practice of Xi Jinping's view on family values will continue to consolidate the foundation of family civilization, continuously improve the degree of social civilization, and inject strong and lasting spiritual strength into building a great modern socialist country and realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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