

## A Structural Analysis on Fostering the Socialist Core Values

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### Abstract

The socialist core values contain two meanings - value pursuit and value norm. Only the country has the ability to represent the overall interests of socialism, clarify the value orientation of socialism, and put forward the socialist core values; only the country has the ability to promote the socialist core values in the whole society, namely, the subject of the socialist core values is the country. For the object of the socialist core values, namely, we hope to be able to take the socialist core value as the value orientation through vigorous popularization, and regulate the behaviors including that of the society, individual citizen as well as the country.

**Key word:** Cultivation of the socialist core values; Content; Subject; Object

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### 1. CONTENT OF FOSTERING THE SOCIALIST CORE VALUES

At the end of 2013, CPC Central Committee officially announced the content of the socialist core values, and made a further explanation that “prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony is the value target at the

national level, freedom, equality, justice and rule by law is the value orientation at the social level, patriotism, dedication, integrity and kindness is the value norm at the individual citizen level.” (*Cultivate and Practice the Socialist Core Values*, 2014, p.1) It is easy to see from the above description that the socialist core values has two connotations, namely, it is both a value pursuit as well as a value norm.

#### 1.1 The Socialist Core Values Is a Value Pursuit

Essentially, the socialist core values are a sense of value. Any value is reflected in the value relationship between the subject and object, and is a positive or negative judgment that whether the object is able to meet the needed attributes of the subject. From the above definition it is not difficult to conclude that “prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony; freedom, equality, justice and rule by law; patriotism, dedication, integrity and kindness” (Ibid., p.4) have ultimately been determined as the content of the socialist core value after a long discussion by experts, scholars as well as the whole society. They provide strong evidences to meet the fundamental development of China’s socialist practical needs, and are worthy of our pursuit of value.

From the perspective of the formation and development of values, formation and development of the values in general has two cases: One is a spontaneously formed development, namely it’s naturally developed in the case of little or no human intervention; the other is a consciously formed development, namely the values is nurtured under the artificial guidance. Obviously cultivation of the socialist core values belongs to the second case. How we extract them out? There are three logical possibilities. One is that these values have become ubiquitous in the real world, we have just refined and generalized them; the second is that these values do not exist in reality, but we believe that they have great significance for the country, society as well as individuals, therefore strongly advocate them. It’s clear that both

cases may be extreme, and the socialist core values are more likely to belong to the third case, namely that these values partly exist in real life, but are not universal. With the further promotion of socialist construction practices, whether development of the country and society, or production and life of the individuals increasingly feel the inconvenience caused by confusion of values, and deeply feel the preciousness of the surviving part of values, so the country vigorously promote it. In summary, from its essence and logic presented, it is easy to see that first of all, socialist core values is a goal worth pursuing, and should provide a value orientation for socialist practices.

### 1.2 Socialist Core Values Is a Value Norm

On the one hand, from the connotation of values, as described above, as a general view on the value of the utility relationship between needs of the subject and attributes of the object, values reflects a pursuit of value, and plays a guiding role on the subject's behaviors. By guiding the subject's behaviors, values provide a standard and measure for the subject, always supervises and regulates the behaviors of the subject. Thus, as a value pursuit, socialist core values provides a value norm for China's socialist construction, regulates China's socialist construction, and only in this way it can ensure the realization of the socialist core values in practices.

On the other hand, there is a distinct background to put forward the socialist core values.

One cannot ignore the background of socialist core values, that is, when the reform, opening up, modernization and social transformation bring about cultural richness and diversity, they also bring about great collision of ideas, the emergence of concept chaos, moral anomie, life and values distortion. It urgently needs a guidance of correct, dominant values. (Yang & Wu, 2013)

Therefore, socialist core values shoulders the mission of regulating people's thinking and behavior.

### 1.3 Socialist Core Values Are the Unity of Value Pursuit and Value Norm

From the content of values, it includes value goal, value orientation and values standard in general. Value goal and value orientation represent the subject's pursuit and orientation, and value norm regulates the subject's behavior. They are integral and inseparable. As mentioned above, however, the socialist core values consists of three levels:

Prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony is the value goal at the national level, freedom, equality, justice and rule by law is the value orientation at the social level, patriotism, dedication, integrity and kindness is the value norm at the individual citizen level." (*Cultivate and Practice the Socialist Core Values*, 2014, p.4)

It is easy to have an illusion that as the value pursuit socialist core values is only targeted on the country and society, and as the value norm it is only targeted on individuals, so that during the process of cultivating

socialist core values one-sided emphasis on the value norm of individuals would be drawn, and value norm of the country and society would be ignored.

In fact, whether to the country, society or individuals, the socialist core values are a value pursuit and a value norm. They are united in the pursuit of the ultimate socialist value - free and comprehensive development of people. As can be seen from the above analysis, the value norm at the individual level is far from being achieved, so it is also a value goal of citizens. To achieve free and comprehensive development of people, it not only requires individual efforts, but also depends on prosperity and social progress of the country. The reason that "prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony" of the country and "freedom, equality, justice and rule by law" of the society are worth pursuing is because they contribute to the free and comprehensive development of people, demonstrate the commitment of socialist country and society to individual values, and respect and protection for individual rights. From another perspective, it can be said that they reflect individuals' expectations to the ideal country and society. Accordingly, the value standard at the individual level more reflects the moral duty to the country, society and others.

Patriotism is reflected in citizens' loyalty to the country, in their conscious efforts to achieve the national interests; dedication is reflected in citizens' responsibility for the national, collective enterprises, reflecting their views to the interests of the country, society and individuals fundamentally; integrity and kindness is reflected in the moral relationship among citizens. (Wu, 2013)

From another perspective it can also be said that they are the moral requirements of socialist country and society to individual citizens. In the process of cultivating socialist core values, only when we enhance the value norm at the national and social levels, continue to honor the commitment to individual values in pursuit of socialist core values at the national and social levels, we can be eligible to put forward individual moral requirements, thus promote the value norm of socialist core value at the individual level to transform into conscious actions.

## 2. VALUE SUBJECT AND CULTIVATION SUBJECT OF SOCIALIST CORE VALUES

Since values are the general and fundamental view of the value problem, and value is the utility relationship between needs of the subject and attributes of the object, any value has a subject. Socialist core values also have a subject without exception. Under normal circumstances, the subject of values is clear and unambiguous, e.g. When talk about someone's values, it is clear that someone here is the subject of values. Therefore, can we be able to assert that the subject of socialist core values is socialism? Obviously, "socialism" in socialist core values is an adjective which defines the social nature of the core value

advocated by us and differentiate it from the core value of other social nature. Therefore, it cannot be the subject of socialist core values. So who is the subject of socialist core values? Some scholars believe to be Communist Party of China, some scholars believe to be the country, some believe to be the people, and some believe to be the Chinese nation, despite claims vary, they all emphasize a single subject of socialist core values. There are also some scholars advocating dual subjects of the country and citizens. For the reason of the above differences, I think it's because we confuse the value subject and cultivation subject of socialist core values.

### **2.1 Value Subject of Socialist Core Values: The People**

The subject of any values has to be people, which are decided by the general connotation of value. Distinguished from the value in the economic context, the value which we generally called refers to the relationship that how attributes of the object meet needs of the subject. From this definition we can see that value is related with the interests and needs of people, and without people's interests and needs. The various attributes of things are neutral with indifferent value. People are the one to need, enjoy and evaluate the object's value. Similarly, the subject of socialist core values can only be people. So are all people the subject of socialist core values? Obviously not, only the people. On the one hand, this is determined by the nature of socialist core values. Socialist core values have a distinct social property, and different societies have different core values. Socialist core values are the core values of the socialist countries, and an important feature of the socialist countries is that people are the masters. This determines that socialist core values must start from the value subject of people, and take achieving free and comprehensive development of the people as the ultimate goal. On the other hand, this is consistent with the ultimate goal of socialist core values - free and comprehensive development of people. Although socialist core values makes distinctions in terms of content at three levels, the reason that we pursue a country of "prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony" and a society of "freedom, equality, justice and rule by law" is because ultimately, this kind of country and society are more conducive to free and comprehensive development of the people. Socialism as a superior social system, the people are its creators and the one to enjoy and assess its values, namely, they are the value subject.

### **2.2 Cultivation Subject of Socialist Core Values: The Country**

Values are multi-level, multi-dimensional, and can be classified as ultimate values, core values, general values according to the position. Core values are values in a dominant position in a society. Socialist core values are in a dominant position in a socialist society, whose cultivation subject has to be the country. On the one hand,

from logic, in a socialist society people have different values due to environmental differences in their respective production and lives. Some of these values are in line with the mainstream values; some are inconsistent with the mainstream values. Based on the above circumstances, our country has proposed socialist core values to guide and affect people's values so as to achieve consensus of people's ideas and ensuring realization of the overall value goal of the socialist society. Only the country can represent the interests of society as a whole, and propose socialist core values in line with fundamental interests of the people and the socialist value goal. On the other hand, from the cultivation process, cultivation and promotion of socialist core values in the whole society require huge human, material and financial supports, only the country has such strength. Of course, this process involves the joint efforts of various organizations and individuals, but all these efforts are performed under advocacy and support of the country, and reflect the will of the country. In summary, whether from the perspective of initiative or capability, only the country is eligible to be the cultivation subject of socialist core values.

## **3. OBJECT OF SOCIALIST CORE VALUES**

The so-called object of socialist core values refers to the fostered object of socialist core values. That is, by vigorous popularization we hope to be able to make socialist core value as the value orientation in order to regulate our behaviors. In this sense, the fostered object of socialist core values is also the practitioner of socialist core values at the same time. Since the socialist core values are classified into three levels of the country, society, and individual citizens, the object of socialist core values, namely the practitioner of socialist core values is also classified into three categories of the country, society and individual citizens. However, they focus on different core values: value goal and norm of the country focus on "prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony"; value orientation and norm of the society focus on "freedom, equality, justice and rule by law"; individual citizens' value standard and norm focus on "patriotism, dedication, integrity and kindness."

That individual should practice the socialist core values is well understood, but as an abstraction, how should a country, a society practice the socialist core values? From a macro level, we should

Form the policies, interests mechanism and social environment conducive to promoting the socialist core values; integrate socialist core values into rule by law, governance by law and administration by law, use the legal authority to enhance people's consciousness to cultivate and practice socialist core values; take practicing socialist core values as an important part of social governance and integrate it into institutional construction and social governance, achieve the mutual promotion of governance effectiveness and moral promotion. (*Cultivate and Practice the Socialist Core Value*, 2014, p.44)

In short, we should implement socialist core values into the entire process of formulating and implementing laws, regulations and policies. From the micro level, staff in the party and government organs at all levels and employees of various social organizations must strictly practice the socialist core values in their work, wherein the party and government cadres at all levels are the key, because their performances during the work not only represent the individual morality, but also represent the country's image. Employees in various government-affiliated institutions are the emphasis, because they are the group who contact the public the most and to a certain extent represents the country's image. A recent survey fully illustrates this point, as per the investigation concerning 2013 "the worst officials in the eyes of the public" by the Crisis Management Research Center of Renmin University of China, the city inspector, school leader, hospital leader, village cadre, police, state-owned enterprises leader and civil affairs cadre turn out to rank the top seven, although the majority of who are not officials in a strict sense. One important reason that they are listed is because there are unethical behaviors among them, and ordinary people have an acute pain because of this.

In summary, socialist core values are unity. No matter to the country, society or individuals it is both a value pursuit and a value norm. People are the subject of socialist core values, and country, society and individuals practice the socialist core values in order to achieve free

and comprehensive development of the people. Country is the cultivation subject of socialist core values, and country, society and individuals are all the objects and practitioners of socialist core values. It needs to be stressed that country is the cultivation subject of socialist core values, and is also one of the objects and practitioners of socialist core values. In the process of fostering socialist core values, the degree that country as the cultivation subject practices socialist core values is directly related to the effectiveness of cultivating socialist core values. If the cultivation subject itself does not practice socialist core values while insisting on the practice of society and individual citizens, the systematic project of cultivating socialist core values will become a one-sided moral requirement to individuals by the country. The result is likely to be that socialist core values have been infused into the eyes and ears, but not into the heart.

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