
Rhizomatic Law and China's Experience: Between Past and Future

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ABSTRACT

The People's Republic of China was founded on 1 October 1949. After the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping decided to launch a new series of reforms, widely known as the China's "opening up" policy (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放). With this new idea, China had to develop the entire legal system from scratch. All the changes were introduced for the sake of building a market economy and boosting the country's economic growth. It is worth noting that the legal system of this country is highly influenced by philosophy, social context and political views. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explain the past experience in building China's legal system and its future

changes based on the concept of "rhizome". Therefore, this study pays attention to some philosophical and social issues, including Confucian philosophy, which still play a crucial role in shaping Chinese reality and law. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the Chinese legal system is a good example of "rhizomatic law". In the case of the PRC, this idea should be perceived through the lens of the complexity and dynamism of the legal framework. The Chinese legal landscape is built on the interplay between formal laws, informal norms and cultural traditions.

KEYWORDS

China, legal system, Confucianism, rhizomatic law, filial piety, guanxi

The essence of "rhizomatic law": Historical background

At the outset, it is worthwhile to note that the concept of "rhizomatic law" was introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. They based it upon the idea of "rhizome" in philosophy which considers a non-hierarchical, decentralized, and fluid structure concerning knowledge, power and social organization. Indeed, this approach differs significantly from the traditional, linear structures. Importantly, from the legal perspective, the "rhizomatic law" introduces a new approach contrary to the rigid legal frameworks. It pays attention to dynamic and adaptative legal systems which stress the importance of interconnectedness. As such, "rhizomatic law" provides an alternative towards understanding the legal systems according to their

fluidity and multiplicity¹. In other words, the “rhizomatic” approach challenges the traditional way of classifying legal systems and opts for viewing law in broader network. Therefore, it focuses on all different types of connections which are not fully predetermined, by contrast, they emerged because of both interactions and negotiations. To illustrate, the concept of Swedish “allemansrätten” addresses public and private domains which are coexisting without a strict dichotomy. This example stresses the flexibility which is inherent in view of the rhizomatic jurisprudence².

One must note that “rhizomatic law” upholds the significance of flexibility and adaptability in terms of legal frameworks³. Apparently, such an approach may even be useful in enhancing the access to justice based on more inclusive interpretations of cultural commons. As such, “rhizomatic law” is recognized as an innovative perspective within the framework of legal theory. Indeed, it promotes not only an understanding of law as a fluid but also interconnected system far from a static set of rules. This perspective seems to facilitate the evolution of legal system itself which aligns with the changing needs and values of the society.

There are many features of the rhizomatic law that can be summarized as follows: decentralization and non-hierarchy, multiplicity and diversity, adaptability and flexibility, interconnectedness and horizontal connections alongside dynamic and non-linear growth.

Pursuant to the first feature, namely decentralization and non-hierarchy, the rhizomatic law differs significantly from traditional legal systems⁴. The latter are based upon the clear chain of command where both courts and legislatures play a crucial role. By contrast, in the case of rhizomatic law, there are many interconnected nodes functioning within a network but there is a lack of a single center of control. This entails that the so-called

¹ G. Deleuze & F. Guattari (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1-8; Patton, P. (2016). Deleuze and naturalism. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 24(3), 348–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2016.1175103>; M.A. Peters & D. Taglietti (2019). Deleuze's rhizomatic analysis of Foucault: Resources for a new sociology? *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1551831>.

² See: M. Bruncevic (2015). We need to talk about the cultural commons: Some musings on rhizomatic jurisprudence and access to art. *NAVEIÑ REET: Nordic Journal of Law and Social Research*, (6), 115–130. <https://doi.org/10.7146/njlsr.v0i6.111056>

³ M. Bruncevic (2014). *Fixing the shadows: Access to art and the legal concept of cultural commons*. Göteborg. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/20043826.pdf>.

⁴ Y. Akindes, (2015). *Rhizome. Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue*, (67). Retrieved from <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/kc67-rhizome.pdf>

authority belongs to many different actors such as individuals, communities, institutions along with informal networks. To illustrate, even nowadays, there are many societies which uphold the existence of customary laws along with religious norms and community practices. In practice, they all coexist with the so-called formal legal practices and thus result in forming a decentralized web of rules.

Secondly, the “rhizomatic law” stands for the coexistence of multiple legal orders which coexist with norms and sources of legitimacy. According to this concept, the law itself cannot be reduced only to a monolithic entity. Instead, the law represents an ever-evolving mosaic where there are various influences existing all together, including culture, technology, politics, and economics, among others. Given this feature, the so-called globalized legal systems require not only the implementation of international treaties, local customs or even digital regulations but also compliance with national laws⁵. As such, there are many legal sources which coexist all together.

Thirdly, the “rhizomatic law” is not only adaptive but also flexible. Therefore, it can easily adjust to new circumstances and challenges. Through flexibility, the “rhizomatic law” upholds innovation and evolution which are not restricted by the existence of principles pertaining to rigid hierarchies. In practice, there are many examples of such adaptability. To name a few, both times of pandemics and natural disasters require some emergency measures to be adopted or even informal mechanisms to be set up in order to provide both reliance and functionality⁶.

Fourthly, instead of relying on a linear or top-down structure, the “rhizomatic law” opts for horizontal connections existing between different actors and levels of society⁷. Accordingly, such connections can be achieved through collaboration, dialogue and mutual influence between different actors and stakeholders. In practice, there are many examples of lobbying

⁵ See: U. Sieber (2010). Legal Order in a Global World – The Development of a Fragmented System of National, International, and Private Norms –. *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online*, 14(1), 1–49. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18757413-90000048>; H. Lindahl (2020). “Chapter 7: Globalisation and the concept of legal order”. In *Jurisprudence in a Globalized World*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved Mar 2, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788974424.00015>; H. Marcos (2023). From Fragmented Legal Order to Globalised Legal System: Towards a Framework of General Principles for the Consistency of International Law. *Athena: Critical Inquiries in Law, Philosophy and Globalization*, 3(1), 90–124. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2724-6299/17223>.

⁶ See: H. Szemző, J. Mosquera, L. Polyák & L. Hayes (2022). Flexibility and adaptation: Creating a strategy for resilience. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 1–19.

⁷ See: M. Bruncevic, *Fixing the Shadows...*, p. 37.

groups, including social movements, grassroots organizations and even civil society which have the impact on legal debates and outcomes. They can achieve their goals based on advocacy, protests and lobbying.

Finally, the “rhizomatic law”, likewise a rhizome plant, grows both dynamically and non-linearly⁸. This entails those new legal ideas, practices and even institutions emerge organically resulting from these existing ones or even merge with the others. Apparently, the blockchain-based smart contracts can be classified as a new form of legal agreement. Therefore, on the one hand, they disrupt traditional contract law. On the other hand, they also integrate with it.

To sum up, the “rhizomatic law” represents an interesting approach which provides a useful tool to understand law which is more adaptable and influenced by different factors. Indeed, this is the case of law in 21st century where there is an immense number of unpredictable situations and new technologies emerging which require to adapt interim measures to comply with such new situations and trends.

“Rhizomatic law” from China’s perspective: General overview

Chinese legal system fully represents the concept of “rhizomatic law” given its unique features. Indeed, in the case of China, the legal system is a mosaic of formal codified law, informal governance and evolving social norms⁹. Therefore, the legal system represents a myriad of historical, political alongside cultural influences¹⁰. To illustrate, there are many traditional values, including collectivism, familial structures and social

⁸ See: S. Hsu (2022). At the critical moment: The rhizomatic organization and “Democracy to Come.” *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 38(4). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0956522122000392>.

⁹ See: Y. Peng (2010). When formal laws and informal norms collide: Lineage networks versus birth control policy in China. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(3), 770–805. <https://doi.org/10.1086/657102>. Accessed 2 Mar. 2025.

¹⁰ L.A. Di Matteo (2018). ‘Rule of law’ in China: The confrontation of formal law with cultural norms. *Cornell International Law Journal*, 51(2), 391–444. Retrieved from <https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cilj/vol51/iss2/3>.

harmony¹¹ which impacted not only legal practices but also legislation. Such cultural norms have been always interacting with formal legal provisions resulting in a unique blend of culture and law. Against this background, the Chinese legal landscape does not pertain to a singular, unified legal tradition, but is akin to “rhizome”. Therefore, China’s legal system is diverse and full of interwoven elements which were evolving over centuries. As such, it is worth remembering that different schools of thought influenced the Chinese legal foundations, namely Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism. Importantly, these philosophies impacted the Chinese legal cultural by balancing moral ethics, natural order and stringent regulations. In 20th century, the legal system has been radically transformed. Along with the promulgation of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the socialist legal framework was launched. Indeed, the Communist Party of China (CCP) plays a crucial role in shaping and directing changes regarding legal reforms in the country. Given that, we can observe intersection between law and political ideology. The aim of this article is to explore the rhizomatic nature of Chinese law through the lens of historical roots, political developments alongside cultural approach. Such an analysis would be helpful to understand the intersections of different factors which contribute to the complexity and adaptability in view of the legal system of the PRC.

Traditional Chinese Legal Thoughts and Modern Chinese Legal System: From Past to Present

To start with, it is worth mentioning that the traditional Chinese legal thought¹² was highly influenced by different philosophies, namely Confucianism¹³, Legalism and Daoism¹⁴. Importantly, each of these schools of thought

¹¹ Z. Liao (2022). Decoding the puzzle: Chinese culture, familial transfers, and disputes in Western courts. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 36(1), ebac026. <https://doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebac026>.

¹² M. Łągiewska (2022). Droit chinois traditionnel: Vision des Confucianistes et Légistes. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*, 35, 479–492. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09753-2>.

¹³ N.S. Bui (2024). Confucian legal tradition. In M. Siems & P. J. Yap (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of comparative law* (256–274). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴ See more: Lee, L. T., & Lai, W. W. (1978). The Chinese conceptions of law: Confucian, Legalist, and Buddhist. *Hastings Law Journal*, 29, 1307. Retrieved from https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_law_journal/vol29/iss6/3.

had a different approach towards law. Despite discrepancies, these philosophies stressed the need to achieve harmony¹⁵, balance and apply a relationality. Therefore, such principles were in line with the concept of “rhizome” where there are many interconnected networks. To name a few examples, the Confucianism gave priority to social relationships, the so-called “five kind of relations” (*wulun* 无论), and communal responsibility rather than individual rights. Pursuant to Confucian philosophy:

“It is an attempt to display in detail the potential of harmony in society if people will only recognize the necessity of conformity to the existing social relations. The rites, as Confucius puts it, remove all perversity and serve to form men’s character. They tie together the natural and social hierarchies: Heaven-Son of Heaven-Great Officers-Small Officers; father-mother-older son-younger son-daughter. The rules, however, ‘do not go down to the common people’. These rules are to govern the governors; the common people, Confucius holds, cannot appreciate them, and must therefore be ordered with the rule of law”¹⁶.

This entails that the Confucian ethics opted for holistic and relational approach. Confucianism, widely known as *rujia* 儒家¹⁷, is considered the most important philosophy in Ancient China. Importantly, this philosophical thought influenced the traditional legal system in this country. Given the Confucianism, the social harmony is prioritized where rites-laws (*lifa* 礼法) played a crucial role. The concept of *lifa*¹⁸ was created by three subsystems, including ritual code, penal code and customary law¹⁹. Accordingly,

¹⁵ See more: C. Li (2008). The philosophy of harmony in classical Confucianism. *Philosophy Compass*, 3, 423–435. <https://philarchive.org/archive/LITPO>.

¹⁶ J. W. Freiberg (1977). The dialectic of Confucianism and Taoism in ancient China. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 2, 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00249484>, p. 184.

¹⁷ See: S. Billioud (2007). Confucianism, “cultural tradition” and official discourses in China at the start of the new century. *China Perspectives*, 2007(3). Retrieved from <http://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/2033>. <https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.2033>. Accessed on 15 February 2025.

¹⁸ J. Pan (2011). Chinese philosophy and international law. *Asian Journal of International Law*, 1(2), 233–248. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2044251310000354>

¹⁹ M. Łągińska (2023) *Legal semiotics and Chinese philosophy*. In A. Wagner & S. Marusek (Eds.), *Research handbook on legal semiotics*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, p. 160. See more: N.P. Ho (2017). Confucian jurisprudence, Dworkin, and hard cases. *Washington University Jurisprudence Review*, 10(1). Retrieved from https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_jurisprudence/vol10/iss1/5.

“This system not only functioned independently but also somehow co-ordinately. By way of explanation, it should be stressed that Chinese philosophy mostly uses the so-called ‘negative’ method of metaphysics. This means that instead of a simple positive definition, scholars rather point out what cannot be defined in such a way. Therefore, with regard to *lifa*, this term cannot be described as a simple concept of *li* 礼 (understood as rites) and *fa* 法 (meaning laws). Since ancient times, the rulers were responsible for formulating rites in line with current circumstances and affairs. In other words, such a concept guaranteed that the rites and laws should be adjusted to contemporary situations”²⁰.

By contrast, the Legalist school of thought was based upon the force of sanctions applied for the sake of obtaining obedience and compliance with the law. Therefore, the priority was given to governance by *fa* or decrees, instead of Confucian’s rule by man and *li*. This entails that the term *fa* was limited only to decree and punishment and thus represented a relatively narrow scope of application. The term *li*, in turn, was a synonym of “propriety, ethics, or moral rules of correct conduct and good manners”²¹. In addition, Confucius represented a skeptical view on the use of law and punishments without any moral rules. According to Analects,

“If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good”²².

This approach emphasizes that the law, which is limited to punishment, would not create a sense of shame for those who commit crimes. By contrast,

²⁰ M. Łagiewska, *Legal semiotics and Chinese philosophy...*, p. 160; see: Zeng, X., & Ma, X. (2006). A dialectic study of the structure and basic concepts of traditional Chinese law and an analysis of the relationship between *li* (ceremony) and *fa* (law). *Frontiers of Law in China*, 1, 34–52; Yu, R. (俞荣根) What is meant by *Li-Fa*? (何谓“礼法”) 孔学堂, 2016(04), p. 16.

²¹ S. Gao & A.J. Walayat (2020). The compatibility of Confucianism and law. *Pace Law Review*, 41, 234, 239–240. <https://doi.org/10.58948/2331-3528.2028>. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/plr/v>

²² Confucius. (1869). *The Chinese classics: The life and teachings of Confucius* (Bk. II, J. Legge, Trans., 2nd ed.). London: N. Trübner.

they would only take actions to avoid punishments. Confucius had different goals. He preferred to build a society that actively sought the good rather than avoid legal punishment. Thus, proper education according to the principles of virtue and *li* would create the right sense of shame, leading to the self-correction of all actions and mistakes into actions of good moral character²³.

To illustrate, the filial piety (*xiao* 孝)²⁴ played a crucial role to maintain not only harmony but also prevent any family disputes. This concept applied to five cardinal relationships in Chinese social which laid the foundation for existing social order. Indeed, the relationship between father and son was commonly seen as the most important pursuant to the Confucian ethics. For this reason, the duties arising from the filial piety were even reinforced through law and punishments in a very strict way. Once a child insulted a parent or grandparent, he would bear a punishment in the form of strangulation. In the case of establishing a separate household or division of property by a child, even though parents or grandparents were alive, the corporal punishment would be applied to him. The situation of a parent or grandparent was completely different. If they kill the son assuming that he was unfilial or disobedient, they will get either a minimal punishment or would be exempted from a punishment at all²⁵. Importantly, this case study confirms unequal status of family member where the father benefited from higher position and was responsible for his children fate without any restrictions.

Another example relates to disputes or violence arising from sibling relationships. In fact, such actions led to the disruption of family harmony and were therefore contrary to Confucian philosophy. In practice, this concept influenced legal outcomes. Thus, crimes of elder abuse, including beating or insulting an elderly sibling, resulted in harsher punishments than similar

²³ S. Gao & A.J. Walayat (2020). The compatibility of Confucianism..., p. 240.

²⁴ Wang, D., Laidlaw, K., Power, M. J., & Shen, J. (2009). Older people's belief of filial piety in China: Expectation and non-expectation. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 33(1), 21-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317110903347771>; Chow, N. (1991) 'Does Filial Piety Exist Under Chinese Communism?', *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 3(1-2), pp. 209-225. doi: 10.1300/J031v03n01_14.

²⁵ Ma, H. H. P. (n.d.). The legalization of Confucianism and its impact on family relationships. *Washington University Law Review*, 65, 674. Retrieved from https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_lawreview/vol65/iss4/5.

crimes against other people. This approach upholds the Confucian principle of hierarchical respect which must exist within the family²⁶.

Overall, legal systems in Ancient China were highly adaptive. As such, they could easily respond to current circumstances alongside local conditions by complying with changing societal needs. One must admit that such a flexibility resembles the rhizomatic features related to a constant transformation and decentralization.

Reform of “opening up” and the “Socialist Rule of Law with Chinese Characteristics” in view of “Rhizomatic law”

The PRC was promulgated on 1 October 1949²⁷. After the Cultural Revolution, the process of changes was initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 alongside the reforms of “opening up” (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放). This policy required the building of the entire legal system from scratch. Currently, the so-called “socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics” exist in China²⁸. Importantly, the Chinese legal system not only incorporated Western institutions and legal frameworks, but also provides a strong centralized control led by the Communist Party of China²⁹. Indeed, such a coexistence of formal laws with informal norms, namely party directives and local customs complies with the concept of “rhizomatic law”. Therefore, this system is recognized as a hybrid structure. Importantly, even though there is a central oversight and leadership existing in the PRC, the laws are implemented through decentralized decisions. This means that local governments and officials at provincial levels benefit from a significant

²⁶ Fang, X. (2012). Confucian ethics and impartiality: On the Confucian view about brotherhood. *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 7(1), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44259369>. Accessed on 2 March 2025.

²⁷ Luney, P. R. (1989). Traditions and foreign influences: Systems of law in China and Japan. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 52, 129-150. Retrieved from <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol52/iss2/7>.

²⁸ See also: Lam, C. K. N., & Goo, S. H. (2015). The intrinsic value of Confucianism and its relevance to the legal system in Hong Kong and China. *The Chinese Journal of Comparative Law*, 3(1), 175-189. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjcl/cxu021>.

²⁹ See: Shaffer, G., & Gao, H. S. (2020). A new Chinese economic law order? *Journal of International Economic Law*, 23(3), 607-635. Retrieved from https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/sol_research/3918. Accessed on 12 February 2025.

discretion in implementing laws adopted by the Chinese legislature³⁰. In practice, it creates a complex web where there are various interactions and interpretations akin to rhizomatic patterns. In addition, the authority fulfils its role not only horizontally but also vertically.

Chinese reality is also highly influenced by informal norms and practices. The so-called *guanxi* 关系³¹, widely known as personal connections, still plays a crucial role in this country. Indeed, the Chinese society stresses the significance of informal networks³² which have an impact on shaping both legal and social outcomes. In practice, such networks function beyond formal legal structures. In the case of decision-making process, a judge Wang divides *guanxi* into three different categories such as emotional, mixed and instrumental. The first one is very often the closest relation³³. Furthermore, “Chinese judges do not live in a vacuum. In courts they are judges, but the moment they take their robes off, they are husbands, wives, colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, classmates and relatives [...]. judges are ensnared in all sorts of *guanxi*, which in turn find ways to influence their judicial decisions”³⁴. In view of rhizomatic concept, *guanxi* are seen as horizontal and non-linear connections commonly spread within the Chinese society.

Lastly, even nowadays, the Confucian philosophy has a significant influence on law in the PRC. To illustrate, the law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly³⁵ was first adopted in 1996 and last amended in 2018. According to Article 1 of this law, it was adopted “in order to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the elderly, develop the cause of ageing and carry forward the Chinese

³⁰ See: Donaldson, J. A. (2017). Introduction: Understanding central-local relations in China. In *Assessing the balance of power in central-local relations in China* (pp. 1–18). Abingdon: Routledge. Retrieved from https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/soss_research/2032. Accessed on 10 February 2025.

³¹ Z. Liao (2022). Decoding the puzzle..., p. 4.

³² See more: Wang, P. (2014). Extra-legal protection in China: How *guanxi* distorts China’s legal system and facilitates the rise of unlawful protectors. *British Journal of Criminology*, 54(5), 809–830.

³³ He, X., & Ng, K. H. (2017). “It must be rock strong!” *Guanxi*’s impact on judicial decision making in China. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 65(4), 841–871. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcl/avx041>; see: Wang, X. (2015). Touguo Mianzi De Guanxian Kongzhi—Yi Duofang Shengcunxing Zhihui Boyi Wei Jichu [The cases “*guanxi*” network overcontrol through face-saving—Based on game of survival wisdom of multiple parties]. *Xiangjiang Falv Pinglun [Xiangjiang Law Review]*, 12, 249–265.

³⁴ He, X., & Ng, K. H. (2017). “It must be rock...”, p. 2.

³⁵ 中华人民共和国老年人权益保障法. (2021, October 29). Retrieved from https://www.gov.cn/guocheng/2021-10/29/content_5647622.htm. Accessed on 2 March 2025.

nation's virtues of respect, care and assistance to the elderly". The law provides that the elderly refer to all citizens over the age of 60 (Article 2). In addition, under Article 3, "the elderly have the right to material assistance from the State and society, the right to social services and social preferential treatment, and the right to participate in social development and share in the fruits of development. It is forbidden to discriminate against, insult, abuse or abandon the elderly". Indeed, the Article 18 of this law is enshrined in Confucian values. Therefore, "Family members should take care of the spiritual needs of the elderly and should not neglect or abandon the elderly. Family members who live apart from the elderly should visit or greet the elderly frequently".

In view of the judgment of the Chinese people's court in Wuxi, a woman was obliged to visit her 77-year-old mother at least once every two months. Aside from providing a financial support, children are also intended to take good care of their parents and thus prevent them from a lonely feeling. This case refers to the "filial piety" which is rooted in Confucian philosophy. Therefore, it implies to be "good to one's parents and fulfilling one's duty to take care of them"³⁶.

Conclusion: Future of Chinese legal system

In the case of China, "rhizomatic law" should be seen through the lens of the complexity and dynamism of the legal system. Obviously, the Chinese legal framework is based on the intersection and interplay of formal laws, informal norms and cultural traditions. Although there is a centralized authority, namely the leadership of the Communist Party of China, all these factors interpenetrate to create a unique mosaic and distinctive socio-political context. Therefore, China's legal system is a good example of "rhizomatic law" in action. Given its unique characteristics, it is worth noting that it cannot be classified as a completely rigid or purely rule-based system. Rather, it is a fluid, interconnected and adaptive framework. The example of family law in China and the rights of the elderly confirms that Confucian values are still important. Notably, "filial piety" is even recognized in the

³⁶ BBC. (2013, July 2). Chinese court orders woman to visit mother. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-23127936>. Accessed on 17 February 2025.

law. Given China's history and socio-cultural background, it does not seem that there would be much change in providing a completely different approach to the law in the future. As such, the "rhizomatic" concept will continue to fit the Chinese reality perfectly.

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