

Persistence in “Hard Core” and Adjustment of “Protective Belt”

Text Analysis on Governance Programme of Chinese Communist Party

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Abstract—By referring to Lakatos’ *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, the governance programme of Chinese Communist Party can be divided into hard core and protective belt. The four cardinal principles are the “hard core” in the governance programme of Chinese Communist Party, and they ran through the period and later period of Mao Zedong. However, changes of the specific expressions of “the four cardinal principles” can be seen in reports at various Party Congresses. Meanwhile, Language of text in reports at Party Congresses has transferred from “revolution – struggle” to “reform – construction”, which is reflection of “protective belt” adjustment. All in all, changes of rhetorical language in reports at Party Congresses can clearly reflect the persistence in “hard core” and positive adjustment of “protective belt” of Chinese Communist Party.

Keywords—the governance programme; “hard core”; “protective belt”; reports at Party Congresses

I INTRODUCTION

As for arrangement of political system based on socialism with Chinese characteristics, it has no objection to regard reports at Party Congresses as the programme of action to guide the socialist modernization of contemporary China. By reading reports at all previous Party Congresses, we can discover some new terms. These terms are distributed in fields like economy, politics, society and culture, reflecting changes of the governance programme of Chinese Communist Party from different aspects. It will provide an interesting perspective for study on contemporary Chinese politics to interpret such changes through quantitative analysis on frequency of words and phrases in reports at Party Congresses. However, despite the rich life practice, semantic analysis on reports at Party Congresses also requires us to surpass a simple quantitative level and offer a certain normative explanation with qualitative significance at the same time. In my mind, Lakatos’ *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes* may provide some help in considering this problem.

II RIGID “HARD CORE” OF GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

The methodology of scientific research programmes is a set of scientific and philosophical theory proposed by Lakatos. According to the original interpretation of Lakatos, a theoretical paradigm that forms in scientific research and obtains extensive approval from the scientific community can be called “research programme”. Every set of “research programme” contains “hard core” and “protective belt”. “Hard core” is the basic hypothesis and principle of

“research programme”. It can decide the property of a “research programme”, so it cannot be refuted. This is a “prohibitive” rule. “Protective belt” is a series of auxiliary hypotheses around “hard core”. When the “research programme” meets some challenges, the auxiliary hypotheses will have to be adjusted and modified. On the one hand, this can protect the “hard core”; on the other hand, the entire set of “research programme” will be full of elasticity and vigor. This is an “incentive” rule. [1]

By referring to and extending the theory of Lakatos, the governance strategy of Chinese Communist Party has been organized into a set of “programmes”. If such analogy is tenable, then “the four cardinal principles” which are adherence to the leadership of the Communist Party, adherence to the people’s democratic dictatorship, adherence to the socialist road, and adherence to Marxism respectively, have formed the “hard core” of the “programme”. On 30 Mar. 1979, Deng Xiaoping made a speech with the title of “adherence to the four cardinal principles” at the theory-discussing meeting, and he pointed out, “In order to realize the four modernizations, we have to adhere to the socialist road, adhere to the proletarian dictatorship, adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party, and adhere to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.” [2] This is the first formal expression about the four cardinal principles. In this paragraph, there is a specific target modifier that is “in order to realize the four modernizations”, but the modal particle which is “have to adhere to” reflects an unconditional implication that is unequivocal and conclusive. Therefore, the four cardinal principles can be regarded as a governing idea of the Communist Party; in another word, it is the “hard core” of the complete set of governance programme of the Communist Party. As for supporters of the programme, the “hard core” cannot be refuted. Once the “hard core” is refuted, the whole set of the programme will be subverted. Therefore, it’s easy for us to understand why Deng Xiaoping further emphasized “unshakable” “prohibitive provision” from the other side after he expressed “have to adhere to” – “If one of the four cardinal principles is refuted, then the whole socialist cause and modernization cause will be subverted.” [3]

In a dialectical way, “have to adhere to” and “unshakable” are the core spirit of the four cardinal principles, rather than rhetorical expression and statement. Since the theory-discussing meeting held in 1979, rhetorical expression and statement of the four cardinal principles has changed subtly whether in official texts of reports and resolutions at Party Congresses or in publicity materials,

learning materials, theoretical works and unified textbooks that interpret and paraphrase the central spirit. For instance, in order to better reflect dialectical unity of democracy for the people and dictatorship for the enemy and connect with organizational forms of political power like the system of people's congress, "proletarian dictatorship" is often expressed as "people's democratic dictatorship" in the four cardinal principles. For another example, under the general framework in which Marxism is combined with practical situations of various countries, "Leninism" is treated as the innovative product of Marxism Russianization, while the innovative product from localization of Marxism in China not only includes Mao Zedong thought, but also contains Deng Xiaoping Theory, the thought of "three representatives", and scientific outlook on development. Therefore, "Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought" in the four cardinal principles is often simplified as "Marxism".

According to retrieve statistics of keywords such as "Proletarian dictatorship", "People's democratic dictatorship", "People's democracy", "Leadership of the Party", "Centralized leadership of the party", "Marxism-Leninism", "Marxism", "Leninism" in reports at all previous Party Congresses after the 8th Party Congress, it can still tell us that the core spirit of the four cardinal principles ran through the period and later period of Mao Zedong. In fact, owing to "continuous persistence", Deng Xiaoping said that the four cardinal principles were "not a new thing" for the Communist Party. [4] People with political awareness know that when "socialism", "people's democratic dictatorship", "leadership of the Party" and "Marxism" are mentioned, reports at Party Congresses declare the political stand of "have to adhere to" in a positive tone without exception. Basically, such way of discourse expression is a path dependence based on the core value of the Communist Party. Any one who tries to open a new path or put on a rival show will be thought to deny the "hard core" in the Communist Party's governance programme and want to realize "bourgeois liberalization". It's unquestionable that we have to defend the "hard core", so what about the "protective belt"? Can we adjust the "protective belt"?

III FLEXIBLE "PROTECTIVE BELT" OF GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

As mentioned in the above content, if the governance strategy of Chinese Communist Party is compared to the "programme" said by Lakatos, then "the four cardinal principles" will be the "hard core" of this set of "programme". According to Lakatos' explanation, "hard core" cannot be falsified, and only "protective belt" can be adjusted. Therefore, we can get the following inference: public ownership, as the foundation of socialist economy, cannot be confuted, and the flexible adjustment space of "protective belt" is reflected in how to understand the implementation mode and dominant position of public ownership. The state system of people's democratic dictatorship cannot be confuted, and the flexible adjustment space of "protective belt" is reflected in how to reform aspects and links that are disharmonious with requirements of socialist modernization in the political system. The leadership of the Communist Party cannot be confuted, and the flexible adjustment space of "protective belt" is reflected in how to perfect leadership style of the Party and enhance the governance capacity of the Party. The fundamental

principles of Marxism cannot be confuted, and the flexible adjustment space of "protective belt" is reflected in how to develop Marxism creatively according to the era condition and the national conditions of China. If Lakatos' perspective is adopted and guarantee & improvement of adaptive capacity to environment of the "hard core" is regarded as the basic function of "protective belt", we will find two thoughts with different orientations and effects by comparing the governance programme of the Communist Party during the period of Cultural Revolution with that during the period of reform and opening up.

As the "alien one" on the way of socialist modernization, the guiding ideology of the Cultural Revolution was elaborated systematically in Advance along the Road Opened up by the October Socialist Revolution written by a commentator of Two Newspapers and One Magazine on 16 Nov. 1967. Its standard name is "theory of continuous revolution under proletarian dictatorship". The governance programme under such guiding ideology is presented in the following figure 1:

"Hard core"	"Protective belt"
Socialist road	"Large in size and collective in nature"; "exterminate private ownership"; "exterminate exploitation"; "run into communism"; "prefer the straw of socialism to the seedling of capitalism"; "cut the tail of capitalism"; etc.
People's democratic dictatorship	"Set class struggle as the programme"; "keep class struggle in mind all the time"; "continue the revolution under proletarian dictatorship"; "smash feudalism, capitalism and revisionism"; etc.
Leadership of the Party	"Eliminate the top dog that insists in capitalism"; "boot out the Party Committee and carry out revolution"; "the great leader, Chairman Mao"; "the wise leader, Hua Guofeng"; etc.
Marxism	"All utterances of Chairman Mao are the truth and one of his word is comparable to thousands of words"; "We will support all decisions made by Chairman Mao and follow all instructions of Chairman Mao"; etc.

FIGURE I. FIGURE I. GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME DURING THE PERIOD OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In short, reform and opening up means to carry out reform within the country and open up to the outside. Reform within the country does not mean to change the basic system of socialism which is the hard core of governance programme of the Communist Party, but to "improve the socialist system". [5] Under the precondition of persisting in this principle, Chinese Communist Party has carried out powerful reform in various fields like economic field and political field and positively adjusted "protective belt" of the governance programme. By taking "socialism" as an example, during the period of Cultural Revolution, the basic appeal of stepping forward the "golden road" of socialism was to carry out "largeness in size and collectivity in nature"; in this sense, we had to eradicate all "seedlings of capitalism". This is undoubtedly a rigid defending strategy. However, during the period of reform and opening up, in order to fully express and reflect superiority of socialism, economic construction was put in the central position; meanwhile, according to the special situation at the primary stage of socialism, civil economy and private economy were

developed as beneficial supplements of socialist public ownership on the premise of sticking to the dominant position of public ownership. This is obviously a flexible and effective protection strategy. Other aspects of persistence in the four cardinal principles are also like this. See the following figure 2 for more details:

“Hard core”	“Protective belt”
Socialist road	“Development is the absolute principle”; “three favorables”; “the primary stage of socialism”; “reform of socialist economic system”; “socialist market economy”; “public ownership as the main form and coexistence of diverse sectors of the economy”; “protect citizen’s private property according to law”; “establish and perfect the modern enterprise system”; “socialism with Chinese characteristics”; etc.
People’s democratic dictatorship	“Carry forward reform of socialist political system”; “Without democracy, socialism is impossible”; “perfect democratic system of socialism with Chinese characteristics”; “construct a socialist country under the rule of law”; “respect and protect human right”; etc.
Leadership of the Party	“Oppose individual superstition”; “abolish lifelong tenure of leading cadres”; “stick to and improve collective leadership structure of the Party”; “develop and perfect democracy within the Party”; “democratic reign, scientific reign and legal reign”; “unification of leadership of the Party, people as the master, and rule by law”; etc.
Marxism	“understand the system of Mao Zedong thought completely and correctly”; “Practice is the sole criterion for testing truth”; “develop Marxism creatively”; “latest achievement from localization of Marxism in China”; “Deng Xiaoping Theory”; “the thought of ‘three representatives’”; “Scientific Outlook on Development”; “socialist theory with Chinese characteristics”; etc.

FIGURE II. GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME DURING THE PERIOD OF REFORM AND OPENING UP

According to the simple comparison between the above tables, we can know that from the period of Cultural Revolution to the period of reform and opening up, the governance programme of the Party has changed to a large extent. Such change can be defined as adjustment of “protective belt”. Such adjustment is not only reflected in occurrence of new concepts and new phrases in reports at Party Congresses, but also shown in the great change of rhetoric language.

IV FROM UTTERANCE OF “REVOLUTION – STRUGGLE” TO UTTERANCE OF “REFORM – CONSTRUCTION”

“Theory of continuous revolution under proletarian dictatorship” during the period of Cultural Revolution is a set of extremely “left” theory that exaggerates social contradictions, persists in polar opposition, favors political movements, and advocates class struggle. [6] From the angle of political rhetoric, demonstration of this theory in life is equal to great prevalence of “violent language”.

Some scholars interpreted that the characteristic of “violent language” is to “thoroughly abolish other meanings”, focus on the “body”, and “realize negation against others and force others to be the object of behavior as well as a pure material”. [7] As a result, there appeared the combat oaths

like “make the east wind prevail over the west wind, or the west wind will prevail over the east wind”, “sweep away all monsters and demons”, “strike them to the dust and then step on them”, etc. During the period of Cultural Revolution, owing to the strong action of the extremely “left” path, “violent language” is not a decorative symbol; instead, it has been systematized or invaded into people’s heart fundamentally. Therefore, after the new path of socialist modernization is determined, there still remains some violence tendency of political rhetoric. See the following table 1:

TABLE I. VIOLENT LANGUAGE

	Revolution	Struggle	Path struggle	Movement	Battleline
The 8 th	39	58	3	27	9 (1)
The 9 th	153	74	5	22	5 (4)
The 10 th	41	37	11	8	2 (1)
The 11 th	141	82	17	15	15 (10)
The 12 th	40	32	0	7	10 (5)
The 13 th	15	8	0	2	4 (2)
The 14 th	16	5	0	1	2 (0)
The 15 th	11	8	0	0	3 (0)
The 16 th	3	7	0	1	3 (0)
The 17 th	6	3	0	2	2 (0)
The 18 th	7	5	0	2	4(0)

From two aspects of semantics and tone, literal expressions like “revolution”, “struggle”, “path struggle”, “movement”, and “battle line” all carry some violence colors at different degrees. In reports at the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Party Congresses, such color is extremely thick; application of violent vocabularies has been reduced since the 12th Party Congress(1982), and expressions like “dictatorship” and “path struggle” have “faded away” totally. The words of “movement” and “battle line” are interesting. According to the logic of the Cultural Revolution, “movement” implies “political movement” in a certain form, and it has complicated relation with “class struggle”, “path struggle”, and “ideological struggle”. Since the 12th Party Congress, application frequency of this word has reduced greatly; it even disappears in the report at the 15th Party Congress, but its deep impression on people has survived doggedly. In this table, figure in the brackets in the column of “battle line” is the time for other applications except “united battle line”. By looking up reports from the 8th Party Congress to the 13th Party Congress, compound words based on “battle line” cover “ideological battle line”, “culture and education battle line”, “economic battle line”, cultural battle line”, “battle line of defense-related science and technology”, “scientific battle line”, “education battle line”, “sports battle line”, and “various battle lines” that is comprehensive. Compared with this, “battle line” mentioned in reports from the 14th Party Congress to the 18th Party Congress mainly refers to “patriotic united battle line”. Except the regular usage of “united battle line”, “battle line” is not used to form other compound words in official texts of reports at Party

Congresses. This may reflect a “deliberate” oblivion to some degree. However, “XX battle line” can still be seen in newspapers and speeches of leading cadres. This means that the battle consciousness has already been implanted into people’s memory silently. By comparing political rhetoric of reports from the 8th Party Congress to the 18th Party Congress, recession of violent language is obvious on the whole. By referring to another group of “peaceful language”, such trend will be clearer. See the following table 2:

TABLE II. PEACEFUL LANGUAGE

	Refor m	Constructi on	Cooperati on	Consultati on	Proje ct
The 8 th	7	75	27	3	11
The 9 th	1	19	1	1	0
The 10 th	1	6	1	0	1
The 11 th	0	51	2	0	0
The 12 th	18	135	18	2	1
The 13 th	175	118	12	13	2
The 14 th	123	173	15	5	2
The 15 th	93	137	16	5	7
The 16 th	89	154	18	5	4
The 17 th	102	188	27	7	9
The 18 th	86	192	28	23	9

The word of “project” is quite interesting. It has been mentioned for 11 times in the report at the 8th Party Congress, taking the first position in reports at Party Congress. However, by inspecting the verbal context, it can be seen that “project” used in the report at the 8th Party Congress is at its technical significance, such as Irrigation and Drainage Project and Sanmenxia Key Project. The only one “project” mentioned in the report at the 10th Party Congress refers in particular to “Project 571” of Lin Biao Group; though it has surpassed the technical scope, the language expression is obviously in a negative tone. In two “left” reports at the 9th Party Congress and the 11th Party Congress, “project” is not mentioned. Rise of its application frequency is actually the political rhetoric characteristic in reports at all Party Congresses after the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. As for the word class, “project” is a technical vocabulary that values operation. However, in reports from the 12th Party Congress to the 18th Party Congress, “project” is used to form compound words with transferred meanings, such as “Spiritual Civilization Project”, “Five One Project”, “the Hope Project”, and “Marxist Theory Research and Construction Project”. In my mind, such application of “project” has reflected the technocracy orientation of the technical government on the one hand; on the other hand, the political mobilization logic implied in it has some family

resemblance with “movement” in previous years. This can partly explain why this word is not mentioned in reports at the 9th Party Congress and the 11th Party Congress. Under an extremely “left” era, when powerful expressions like “struggle” and “movement” became an optimum choice, “project”, as a “weak” expression, was hard to overstep the high threshold of political rhetoric, and vice versa.

Since the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, concepts of “reform”, “system reform”, “construction”, “economic construction” and “modernization” have occurred in reports at Party Congresses, and they have stayed at a high level. Reports at Party Congresses are official texts that have been deliberated, so such rhetorical device obviously tries to emphasize characteristics and key points of the governance and administration strategies of the Party. What’s notable is that since the 12th Party Congress, vocabularies that can settle disputes in a peaceful way, like “cooperation” and “consultation”, have been applied, and their application frequency has increased on the whole. If the win-win interest coordination mechanism is treated as the institutional opposite of the action logic of “a life-or-death struggle”, then the administration idea of “building up a harmonious society” incubated by the central collective leadership with Hu Jintao as the General Secretary and solemnly expressed in the report at the 17th Party Congress can also be regarded as thorough separation from the class struggle programme in the sense of national governance means. From the 8th Party Congress to the 18th Party Congress, “struggle” and “harmony” can be treated as two representative political rhetorics. It can be seen at a glance that these two political rhetorics contain adverse governance concepts.

V CONCLUSION

By persisting in the four cardinal principles, “hard core” of the governance programme can be positively maintained. By proactively adjusting the protective belt, the whole set of the programme will be full of elasticity and vigor. It is not exaggerated to say that the great achievements of socialist modernization in contemporary China are obtained under the guidance of this set of open programme. Generally speaking, dogmatic speech that objects to adjustment of the “protective belt” is ultra-left; while speech that criticizes the “hard core” is ultra-right. As it were, in the process of socialist modernization, objection to left and prevention of right are two fundamentals in the governance strategy of Chinese Communist Party. It’s reasonable to believe that such practice dialectics of “persistence” and “development” can also be positively reflected in the report texts at Party Congresses.

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