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China's Social Credit System: Orwellian Project or the Application of Traditional Philosophical-religious Ideas to the Contemporary Society?

Summary

China's emerging Social credit system is viewed very critically in the West and quite contradictorily in China, although some surveys of Chinese opinion high degree of approval among. The paper aims to investigate the reasons of such approval, raising the assumption, that among those reasons could be the revitalization and application of traditional Chinese worldview, mainly the elements of religion, to the contemporary society and technologies. The paper starts with the discussion of few important transregional and comparative surveys (done on 2018–2019) of

the opinion of Chinese about this system, with the emphasis on the explanation of their approval. It proceeds with the analysis of those elements of Chinese religion and „moral economy“, which are supposed as important for such approval, namely, the treatment of the fate (ming), merits and demerits in early Daoist religion and the application of such „moral economy“ to the writing of „Ledgers of merit and demerit“ in the late imperial China, as well as post-maoist China for the evaluation of the individual behavior in the formation of exemplary and harmonious society.

Keywords: social credits, trustfulness, fate, moral economy, merits, demerits, moral points.