

History of Logic in Contemporary China (1949–2021)

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For any Western scholar interested in the history of Chinese logic or the broader intellectual history of modern China, the past ten years have been filled with excitement, as more and more monographs, edited volumes and articles on the history of logic in China started to appear in Western academia. This process of the formation of Western studies on the history of logic in China gained significant momentum with the separate, yet still inherently interlinked, revitalizations of the studies of “Chinese logic” on the one side, and the modern history of logic in China on the other. Following early important contributions by Anglophone scholars based at American and European universities, in particular those of Bo Mou, Chad Hansen, Christoph Harbsmeier and others, a new wave of scholarship on Chinese traditional logic was established in the West as the first building block in Western interest in the history of logic in China. One of the first and more recent significant advances in Western scholarship on the overlapping conceptual histories of Chinese and Western logic in China was made in 2011, when the book *Discovery of Chinese Logic* by Joachim Kurtz was published. Arguably, historical studies like the one conducted by Kurtz, and the rising interest in the notion of Chinese logic amongst Western philosophers and sinologists, resulted in a more significant increase of both general scholarly interest and subsequently also various kinds of publications authored by Western scholars. Apart from individual contributions made by scholars like, for example Lisa Indraccolo, Rafael Suter, Liu Fenrong, Jeremy Seligman and others, in recent years the more concerted efforts of Western scholars started bearing fruit. Concurrently, the gradual rise of Western scholarly interest in the history of logic in China also prompted an increase in academic exchanges with Chinese scholars in the field, and in turn also an increase in English language publications, in which the above-mentioned Western scholars joined their efforts with their Chinese colleagues. Amongst the most significant recent results of such collaborations we can count publications such as *Dao Companion to Chinese Philosophy of Logic* (2020) edited by Yiu-ming Fung and *The Gongsun Longzi and Other Neglected Texts* (2020) edited by Rafael Suter, Lisa Indraccolo, and Wolfgang Behr. Together with edited volumes like *Philosophy of Language, Chinese Language, Chinese Philosophy* (Bo Mou ed. 2018) and the recent publication of the first collated anthology of the School of Names

(*Mingjia* 名家) by Ian Johnston and Wang Ping (2019), all these publications mark the start of a new stage in Anglophone studies on the history of Chinese logical thought and history of logic in China.

Published one year before the next monumental monograph in the above-listed series, the *Handbook of Logical Thought in China* edited by Liu Fenrong, Jeremy M. Seligman and Zhai Jingcheng (forthcoming in 2023, Springer), this special issue aims at filling in an important gap in Western scholarship by presenting a collection of articles summarizing and evaluating major advances in Chinese studies in logic in the last 70 years. The second special issue on logic in the *Asian Studies* journal, this special issue will be one of first such issues focusing on development of research on logic in contemporary China (PRC) published in English in a Western scholarly journal. Moreover, the great majority of the contributions collected in this issue were authored by the leading Chinese researchers in the relevant subfields of logic, from philosophers of logic to established experts in branches of logic such as mathematical logic, inductive logic and so on. Since the contributors also include the authors of the above-mentioned forthcoming handbook, this special issue could also be regarded as a part of the same collaborative efforts between Western and Chinese scholars in establishing a common platform that could more efficiently showcase both the achievements and advances in Chinese academic research on or related to logic, as well as Western research on the history of logic in China.

The heart of this special issue consists of nine articles surveying different aspects of research on logic in modern and contemporary China, of which the first three present a general overview of logic as a scientific discipline and a subject of study.

Chen Bo's extensive overview of the conceptual and scientific development of various types of logic thus presents a sort of panoramic view over the intricate and complex networks that underlay the research of logic in China in the last 70 years. Chen's exhaustive and comprehensive study does not provide a general historical and contextual outline within which the remaining contributions are to be read and understood, but more an important spearheading attempt at presenting a concise image of the complex scenery of Chinese research on logic to a Western readership. In a more focused manner, Hu Yang's and Hu Zehong's retrospective and prospective account of studies in philosophy of logic offers important insights into the very identity of this concept in the Chinese discursive contexts. By so doing, the authors not only set out to sketch the general developmental trends in past and current Chinese research on the philosophy of logic, but also strive to address the very question of the identity of the whole discourse within the Chinese intellectual sphere on the one side, and to illuminate its segments that overlap

with the Western discourse on the other. Dealing with similar methodological issues, Zhai Jincheng and Liu Yongqiang explore the various historical dimensions of native Chinese studies on traditional “Chinese logic”. In their paper, Zhai and Liu aim at creating a more consistent and concise historical narrative, interconnecting the period of initial establishment of the discipline with the subsequent two main stages in the development of research into China’s own logical past and heritage. Akin to the preceding study, the importance of Zhai’s and Liu’s contribution also resides in their very meaningful presentation of the more recent trends and the possible future trajectories in Chinese research on logic.

The second section of this special issue contains a selection of articles focusing on more technically specialized branches of contemporary Chinese logic, which in the recent decades obtained more attention by virtue of their applicability in natural sciences and emerging technologies. Generally speaking, the papers collected in this section provide both a critical discussion of the historical backgrounds of these technologically pertinent branches of logic, as well as more in-depth assessments of the theoretical and technological challenges underpinning their past, present, and future developmental trends. This section opens with the article by Liu Fenrong and Li Dazhu, exploring the extremely interesting developments in one of the most recently emerged branches of logic, known as the social network logic. Tracing its origins back to the epistemic logics of the latter half of the 20th century and providing a detailed outline of its recent results and developmental directions, the authors present the intricate and rapidly developing landscape of Chinese studies of this new discipline. One of the key contributions of this extremely timely and relevant study consists, undoubtedly, in the authors’ detailed outline and explanation of the recent Chinese advances in the graph game logic approach. Ren Xiaoming gives a concise introduction into the past and new developments in Chinese studies of contemporary inductive logic, presenting the most important Chinese research on Hume’s problem of induction and probabilistic inductive logic in the light of general theoretical developments in the field, and placing the more recent advances in Pascalian and non-Pascalian probabilistic logic into a perspective with the theoretical aspects connected to advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and related technologies. This is followed by Wu Hongzhi’s detailed investigation of the past and current trends in Chinese studies of informal logic and critical thinking. Similar to other contributions, probably the greatest contribution of Wu’s article resides in its thorough evaluation of the current situation of research on this important branch of logic in China, and the long process of integrating Chinese researchers into international academic circles. The most outstanding results in Chinese studies of logic of natural language are outlined in Zou Chongli’s and Li Kesheng’s contribution, another

ground-breaking contribution to the Western scholarship on the history of logic and related sciences in contemporary China.

The penultimate section of the present issue is devoted to the century-long presence of mathematical logic in China and its developments in the more recent past. It opens with Jan Vrhovski's exhaustive study of the evolution of the notion and academic discipline of mathematical logic in the 1930s, in which the author reveals some formerly less well-known facts pertaining to the early disciplinary branching of the field into a philosophical and mathematical field of study. Vrhovski's detailed discussion of the early of contemporary mathematical logic in China is followed by a comprehensive analysis of the more recent developments provided by Wang Hongguang and Du Guoping. In their paper on Chinese research on mathematical logic and foundations of mathematics, Wang and Du outline the past developments in the field on the one hand and showcase the most recent significant results in the field on the other. While this paper represents one of the first concentrated accounts on Chinese research in the field of the past few decades, its most pertinent aspect resides in its systematic presentation of Chinese mathematical logicians' contributions to medium logic and their creation of a relatively unique type of logical notation.

In the final section of this special issue some space has also been allocated to comparative and other analytical excursions into traditional Chinese logic and techniques of argumentation (rhetoric). In this regard, a new comparative approach towards interpreting one of the central texts of Chinese traditional logic, the *Gongsun Longzi* 公孙龙子, was adopted by She Sheqin in her critique of the concept of reference-based judgment of the treatise "Zhiwu lun 指物论" in light of Friedrich Hölderlin's ideas on judgment and human existence. Presenting a contrast to She's essentially ontological view on traditional Chinese logic, in her article Jana S. Rošker sets out to demonstrate the possibility of meaningfully analysing Hui Shi's logical paradoxes by means of the method of sublation. Finally, more light is cast on the use of historical parables in Marcin Jacoby's article analysing techniques of indirect persuasion in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*). By and large, all three papers employ innovative and revealing approaches through which the traditional Chinese logic and discourses on argumentation can be presented to both Western and Chinese readership in entirely new ways.

Last but not least, the editors hope that this special issue will serve as a new and important building block in establishing a stronger bridge spanning the gaps that still exist between China and the West, facilitating a more bilateral and efficient exchange of knowledge between these rich and diverse academic communities.

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