

# Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History

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Volume 8 | Issue 1

Article 1

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4-2018

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### Recommended Citation

Kim, Sung Min (2018) "Justification by Heaven: A Comparative Analysis of Political Legitimacy in Confucianism and Mohism," *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

DOI: 10.20429/aujh.2018.080101

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/aujh/vol8/iss1/1>

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**Justification by Heaven:  
A Comparative Analysis of Political Legitimacy in Confucianism and Mohism**

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Before the unification of China under Qin Shi Huang in 211 BCE, the region was filled with unceasing strife between powerful lords vying for domination. Before the disintegration of the feudal Zhou dynasty's authority, these lords were restrained by the political, military, and moral power of the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子), the Zhou king. Gradually, however, the states that were supposed to be subservient to the king increasingly acted as independent countries, amassing armies and invading their neighbors for the sake of increasing their own power. Though the vassals for some time continued to present their heavenly-appointed ruler with the appropriate sacrifices, even the aura of its moral authority started to fade. At an increasing pace, the prestige and practice of the rites and institutions or *li* 禮 of Zhou declined and powerful lords increasingly took for themselves the title of king, nominally reserved only for the Zhou ruler. The former vassals eventually all appropriated the sacred rituals of kings and increasingly ignored the tiny remnant state of Zhou, until the state of Qin finally conquered it in 255 BCE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 41-42; Hsiao Kung-Chuan, *A History of Chinese Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 28-30.

With the disintegration of the Zhou political system, chaos increased as the various kings were free to engage in treachery and intrigue, launching wars of conquest that saw the rise of centralized autocracy. Instead of relying on vassals to provide troops, the warring states adopted a bureaucratic system where the military was responsible directly to the king instead of the nobility. This centralization allowed the size of armies to vastly increase, and produced an escalation of war and civilian casualties. To bring harmony and peace to the war-ravaged land, many different schools of philosophies arose to advocate their visions of how society should be run, collectively called the Hundred Schools of Thought (*zhuzibaijia* 諸子百家).<sup>2</sup> In the philosophical paradigm of the time, three streams of thought were possible: attempting to reconstitute the old Zhou system in some form, accepting the new trend of centralization and justifying it, and rejecting all political systems altogether in favor of a pursuit of individual self-sufficiency. For the first kind, the two of the most important of these schools of thought were Confucianism and Mohism.<sup>3</sup>

Confucianism and Mohism, in envisioning the restoration of peace under their versions of a new sociopolitical order, had to adapt to and be familiar with the social, political, and cultural concepts inherited from the past, which meant that the concept of Heaven (*tian* 天) was an important consideration for them to gain political legitimacy. From the Western Zhou dynasty onwards, all Chinese states, even after the weakening of that dynasty, had absorbed the Zhou idea that this supreme power was the one that gave the permission for a king to rule. This

<sup>2</sup> de Bary, Theodore, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 42; Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 31-177.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

permission to rule was called the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). The ruler had this legitimacy to rule all the states due to both his moral virtue and that of his dynasty's ancestors. This legitimacy was symbolized by the ruler's title of Son of Heaven (*tianzi*), representing the belief that the founder of the Zhou dynasty was virtuous, Tian treated him as its son, that is, to entrust him with the dynasty.<sup>4</sup> The Mandate of Heaven essentially functioned as the following: When a ruler and his dynasty became corrupt, Heaven would first send subtle warnings to dissuade the ruler from his wrong-doing. If the ruler continued to rule badly, then Heaven would permit rebellions to arise in order to replace that ruler and dynasty with one who was more virtuous. This new ruler in turn would have the Mandate of Heaven to rule as long as the common people have plenty of food and security and the rites to the ruler's ancestors and Heaven were upheld.<sup>5</sup>

Confucius, the revered founder of Confucianism, along with famous thinkers such as Mencius and Xunzi, were the most notable defenders of many of these traditional ideas passed down from the Xia, Shang, and Zhou. Essentially, they saw the chaos of their time coming from the breakdown of the Zhou political order centered around *li*. With this disintegration, the Confucians argued that the social hierarchy supported by *li* was also collapsing, in which situation the members of society do not perform their proper duties according to their social positions. People in this situation are thought to be incapable of finding a foundation to implement any desire for benevolence. When proper duties are not fulfilled as a result, the logical conclusion for the political order in the Confucian worldview would be the denigration of the ruler's mandate to rule into mere formality. They therefore advocated for a reestablishment

<sup>4</sup> Lu Xiufen, "Understanding Mozi's Foundations of Morality: a Comparative Perspective," *Asian Philosophy*, no. 2 (July 2006): 126.

<sup>5</sup> de Bary, Theodore, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 27-40.

of the cultured society of the Zhou as a guide back to a society where the ruler would be like the sage-kings of yore who understood and possessed the Mandate of Heaven. As a sage-king, the ruler would thus be able to understand how to meet the needs of the state and the common people.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, Confucianism was not a reactionary philosophy which wanted to restore the Zhou political order entirely. In fact, in some aspects, it was quite radical in comparison to the old beliefs during the period before the Zhou's disintegration, such as its attitude of encouraging meritocracy. Not having been a member of nobility himself, Confucius was one of the prospective wanderers (*shi* 士) of that age, providing practical and philosophical training to students of all social classes and seeking employment from the various Chinese states. He and subsequent Confucians propounded that those worthy of government positions, the gentleman (*junzi* 君子), should not only come from the ruling houses, as during the feudalistic Zhou, but from among all who have sufficient virtue and skills. Confucianism was also more humanistic than the traditional worldview of the Zhou, de-emphasizing the examination of the nature of Heaven and the spiritual world as inspiration for governance in favor of examining how *Tian* ordered the human world by showing the venerable example of the sage-kings. Heaven and the spirits were also supposed to be revered and placed at a distance from the daily life of a gentleman because they were seen as ultimately unknowable to humanity.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.,41-63; Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 60-134.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid; Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 86-124; Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 284.

The founder of Mohism, Mozi, on the other hand saw the problem of his day mainly stemming from people not following the Will of Heaven (*tianzhi* 天志), which is embodied in the principle of impartial love (*jian'ai* 兼愛). As he himself states, “What is the Will of Heaven that is to be obeyed? It is to love all the people in the world universally.”<sup>8</sup> To him, humans should not base their standard of behavior upon human example, said to have inconclusive results, but instead trust in the all-inclusive, impartial standard of Heaven and the examples of good spirits and gods. Rituals were to be carried out for the sole simple purpose of attracting favor from Heaven and the gods. Following the standard and Will of Heaven in this way, the ruler would restore peace to society by becoming a moral arbiter. The Son of Heaven would ensure peace in society by listening to the petitions that would explain what is good and evil within society. After consideration, laws that would rectify the situation then would be issued. Those rulers who followed how Heaven worked and governed according to these principles would be considered legitimate. These legitimate rulers would be able to ensure that only the competent were able to assume office based on virtue regardless of birth and bring the common people in harmony under the proper management of benevolent government for the universal betterment of society.<sup>9</sup>

From these ideas, there are some important conditions that had to be satisfied in order for a ruler to legitimately access power under both the Confucian and Mohist conceptions of Heaven. The first is that Heaven is satisfied with the attitude the ruler adheres to in order to carry out the rites, governance, and other government functions. The second is if the realm of Heaven

<sup>8</sup> Mozi, *Mozi* (Chinese Text Project), <http://ctext.org/mozi>.

<sup>9</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 225-257.

and the spirits, in one way or another, are respected. The third is Heaven's approval of how and towards which categories of people the Son of Heaven focuses on providing governance. In both philosophies, if these conditions are not fulfilled, the ruler would, in one way or another, experience a decline in harmony and prosperity with the government and the subjects he rules over due to the nature of Heaven.<sup>10</sup> However, how these conditions were interpreted to be satisfied was vastly different due to the fundamental differences in philosophies each had in comparison to the other. As this paper will elaborate later on, although sharing some similar ideas on this aspect of government, Confucianism and Mohism were ultimately different in terms of understanding how to gain sacred political legitimacy from *Tian*. On one hand, Confucians believed in their idea of a Mandate of Heaven fulfilling the criteria whereas the Mohists adhered to their idea that the Will of Heaven was more suitable. Due to this divide of how to understand Heaven's relevance for the political realm, Heaven's role in bestowing political legitimacy works differently between Confucianism and Mohism, particularly on the specific conditions of how to conceive of the function of rites, the nature of Heaven itself, and sociopolitical considerations for partiality.

First, the two schools of thought greatly differed on their views of the nature of rites and sacrifices to the spirits due to their different ideas of the Mandate of Heaven in contrast to the Will of Heaven. For Confucians, sacrifices to Heaven were not to appease the spirits in order to gain favor, but foremost to cultivate the person undertaking the rites. As Xunzi elaborates, Confucians also conceived man's capability to carry out rites as a natural endowment by Heaven, following rites is an extension of the patterns of nature that the sage would use as a prescriptive

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.,211-212; Lu, Xiufen, 128.

model<sup>11</sup> towards obtaining virtue and therefore maintain Heaven's favor. Confucians believed rites were dominantly a means to transform people towards benevolent behavior by building up an entire socio-political order that reinforces humane authority and hierarchy.<sup>12</sup> This is the Confucian expansion of the definition of *li* as rites into a more encompassing concept that uses rites to bring about moral transformations towards openness in following Heaven's Mandate. This attitude towards Heaven and *li* is addressed in the Confucian classic of the *Analects*. In the *Analects*, Confucius states, "How have I gone downhill! It has been such a long time since I dreamt of the Duke of Zhou."<sup>13</sup> The dream of the Duke of Zhou is a representation of the access to moral cultivation through rites that a ruler would need to have in order to ensure Heaven's favorable conditions. By admitting the large space of time between when he spoke and his dream, Confucius is also stating that the rulers and intellectuals of his time were becoming increasingly distant from the Mandate made manifest in the ancient kings.

The Confucians also inherited the idea of the Zhou system in which the belief that Heaven itself is unresponsive to rituals of the living. They inherited the idea from the kings of Zhou that rituals and sacrifices for the sake of earning favors directly from Heaven was futile to a resulting lack of response. But, the Zhou dynasty in their governance depended on their sacrifices pleasing their deceased ancestors in order to beseech Heaven's favor. The intermediaries therefore would have been the various ancestral spirits who passed onto them the right to rule by Heaven.<sup>14</sup> However, for the Confucians, the ruler and the gentleman should not be concerned with using rituals to gain Heaven's favor. Heaven's favor and the Mandate is

<sup>11</sup> Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 132.

<sup>12</sup> Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 68.

<sup>13</sup> Lau, D. C. trans., *Confucius: the Analects: (Lun yü)* (Penguin Books, 1970), 90.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). 67-98.



obtained in this school of thought through a more indirect manner by following the Way (*Dao* 道) of Human established Heaven and the Way's proper principles. For example, Confucius states in the *Analects*, "With Yu [one of the ancient sage-kings], I can find no fault. He ate and drank the meanest fare while making offerings to ancestral spirits and gods with the utmost devotion proper to a descendant."<sup>15</sup> Yu is found laudable by Confucius due to his steadfast adherence to the ritual of sacrifice instead of the piety of the offering itself.

These Confucian thoughts contrast heavily with the Mohist point of view on the function of rites. First of all, Mohists emphasized rejecting the rituals of antiquity being done for the sake of supporting a sophisticated moral system of behavioral conduct. There was no impassable barrier between Heaven and Man in terms of communication and intervention. Those who gave sacrifices to the spiritual world Tian presides over would receive tangible benefits in return.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, unlike Confucius, who emphasized the refined rituals of the Zhou dynasty, Mohism also rejected the institutional authority of antiquity concerning rituals in favor of a more simple carrying out of rituals and living in general.<sup>17</sup> "In another criticism against the Confucians by the Mohists, the Mohists disagreed with ordering society based on the reference of the elite culture of antiquity, as shown in the following passage: "The Confucians say, 'The noble person must use ancient speech and wear ancient dress before he can be considered humane.' But we answer, 'The so-called ancient speech and dress were all modern once, and if at that time the men of antiquity used such speech and wore such dress, then they must not have been noble persons.'"

<sup>15</sup> Lau, *Confucius: the Analects: (Lun yü)*. 88.

<sup>16</sup> Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*, 103.

<sup>17</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 33-35.

Must we then wear the dress of those who were not noble persons and use their speech before we can be considered human?”<sup>18</sup>

Unlike the Confucian idea of the gentleman, which is highly characterized by learning from the refined culture of antiquity, Mozi’s “worthy men” were slanted towards learning from hands-on service and “practical” techniques.<sup>19</sup> For the Mohist Will of Heaven, Heaven therefore would bestow political legitimacy to the virtuous based on a ritual’s service and moral alignment towards Heaven. This is unlike the Confucian’s Mandate of Heaven where the ability to maintain credentials for ruling is tied to the upholding the example of Tian-mandated Zhou dynasty through the establishment of the proper rites and etiquette.

Examining the second issue both schools argued about, the nature of Heaven itself, one must note that both the Confucian and Mohist schools are found to share some commonalities in this issue. The first amongst these is the common conception that the ordering of the world was fashioned by some supreme natural order or being (called Tian) that is the highest authority over the universe and the ultimate source of political order. The following passage exemplifies both the Confucian and Mohist attitude towards Heaven on this matter: “Wan Zhang said, ‘Was it the case that Yao have the realm to Shun?’ Mencius said, ‘No, the Son of Heaven cannot give the realm to someone.’ ‘But Shun did possess the realm. Who gave it to him?’ ‘Heaven gave it to him....The Son of Heaven can present a man to Heaven, but he cannot cause Heaven to give him the realm.’”<sup>20</sup>

Another quote by Mozi further supports the fact that both Confucians and Mohists shared the view of Tian as a standard of moral, and therefore political, reference. “The Will of Heaven

<sup>18</sup> de Bary, Theodore. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 76.

<sup>19</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> de Bary, Theodore, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 143-144.

to me is like the compasses to the wheelwright and the square to the carpenter. The wheelwright and the carpenter measure all the square and circular objects with their square and compasses and accept those that fit as correct and reject those that do not fit as incorrect.”<sup>21</sup> In that text, this concept is further illustrated in this following passage: “I know Heaven is more honourable and wise than the emperor for a reason: When the emperor practises virtue Heaven rewards, when the emperor does evil Heaven punishes. When there are disease and calamities the emperor will purify and bathe himself and prepare clean cakes and wine to do sacrifice and libation to Heaven and the spirits. Heaven then removes them. But I have not yet heard of Heaven invoking the emperor for blessing. So I know Heaven is more honorable and wise than the emperor.”<sup>22</sup>

Along with thinking of Heaven as a moral and political compass, both schools think there is no apparent distinction between the order of the world, and what orders it. One can find these two aspects of the notion of Tian in both the Confucian and Mohist schools.<sup>23</sup> In this way, both the Confucian and Mohist ideas of Heaven’s intent blur the boundary between the will of the people and the manifestation of Heaven’s ordering of society. Therefore, the sentiments of the common people both Confucian and Mohist rulers were obliged to serve could be thought of as Heaven’s will itself. Historically, one can see how this specific concept of Heaven has influenced Chinese emperors and officials to consider their legitimacy tied to the mood of the general body of commoners. For example, powerful officials justified the overthrow of emperors in favor of other dynastic heirs by stating that the deposed emperor’s decisions led to disasters inflicting suffering on the common people.

<sup>21</sup> *Mozi*.

<sup>22</sup> *Mozi*.

<sup>23</sup> Lau, *Confucius: the Analects: (Lun yü)*, 96-97.

With these similarities in mind, there is still a fundamental divide in the two different worldviews of Confucianism and Mohism regarding the subject of Heaven's nature. In one of the many dialogues contained within the text, it is written, "Chi-lu asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served. The Master said, "You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?"<sup>24</sup> In this quote, Confucius expounds his idea of Heaven and the spirits being ultimately unknowable beings (as mentioned before). That is why Confucius says in the *Analects*, "The gentleman stands in awe of three things. He is in awe of the Decree of Heaven. He is in awe of great men. He is in awe of the words of the sages. The small [petty] man, being ignorant of the Decree of Heaven, does not stand in awe of it."<sup>25</sup> Though Heaven seems to have generally sent down various sage-kings to instruct the people in the world, Confucius emphasizes admiring and studying the example of the sage-kings, not the immediate virtue of Heaven itself. Notice in this quote how the words of sages and great men are equated with the Decree/Mandate of Heaven in its moral instruction of rulers and mankind.

In contrast to the Confucian attitude of Heaven being an ultimately unknowable supreme entity or natural order that provides political legitimacy by simply establishing principles for the ruler to follow, Mohism also embraced the idea that Heaven is a close, moral entity the rulers can consult for guidance.<sup>26</sup> This is due to the Mohist conception of Heaven as an entity clearly influencing reality and intended for the benefit of its chosen rulers. For Mozi, the Son of Heaven, experiencing the direct, controlling power of Tian, is a subject that is not vague, distant, baseless, and empty. To him, it is by Heaven's nature as an entity of love and direct human relevance that the various kings of yore were instated or rejected by the world, depending on their conformity

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>26</sup> Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*, 101.

to its intent.<sup>27</sup> This is the most distinguishing part of Mozi's concept of *tianzhi* as the replacement of the Mandate of Heaven. Part of the reason for the Mohist school to use this notion is that Mozi believes that the Confucian school has turned the early Zhou notion of the Will of Heaven into a notion of "fixed fate". In a major criticism against this perceived fatalism of the Confucians, the Mohists wrote, "...the Confucians believe firmly in the existence of fate and propound their doctrine, saying 'Long life or early death, wealth or poverty... Are all decreed by the ordinance of Heaven... Human wisdom and strength can do nothing.'"<sup>28</sup> The use of the term "Will of Heaven" not only allows the Mohist school to distinguish themselves from the Confucians but also to reject the interpretation of Mandate of Heaven as a doctrine of fatalism.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, for gaining a blueprint on how to proactively align with the Will of Heaven and ensure legitimacy, the ruler would have to follow Mozi's saying that, "If the gentlemen of the world really desire to follow the way and benefit the people they must carefully investigate the principle that the Will of Heaven is the origin of magnanimity and righteousness."<sup>30</sup>

For the third issue of this paper, partiality and social differentiation, some of the philosophical thoughts that aligned Confucianism and Mohism had the similar idea that the Son of Heaven should follow the principles of Tian and not exclusively bring royalty and aristocracy into the offices of government. They both believed that the ruler Confucius and Mozi both held the ideal of "ministers and premiers of commoner origin," and Mozi's denunciations of Confucius (of which some have been examined in this paper) did not extend to his views on meritocracy.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, they both shared the view that benevolence should be extended to

<sup>27</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 245.

<sup>28</sup> de Bary, Theodore, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 75.

<sup>29</sup> Lu, 127.

<sup>30</sup> *Mozi*.

<sup>31</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 253-254.

all men, whether if it starts with a prospective ruler's conduct toward the family or instead begins with an immediate embrace of impartial love.<sup>32</sup> For Mozi's idea of *tianzhi* as loving impartially, his ideal was to be strived for as an immediate antidote to the disorder his troubled times faced. For Confucius, this was to be completed in the long run. Going along with Heaven's Mandate, the ruler would first seek to order the world by the principle of filiality, then gradually expand his benevolence to wider ranges of relationships until at last the ideal of everyone being in a Great Community (*datong* 大同) is achieved.<sup>33</sup>

Despite their views of social differentiation being shared on government meritocracy and its hopeful irrelevance in the long run, Confucians and Mohists frequently argued with one another on the exact approach to the third issue of political legitimacy: how the approval of Heaven would be dispensed based on the ruler's degree of partiality to his own family in comparison to the other members and stratas of society. This argument stems from the idea that the way of benevolent conduct (which for both philosophies ultimately is based on some aspect of *tian*) under Confucianism would be modeled on filial piety and family relationships,<sup>34</sup> in contrast to the aversion of filial piety of the Mohists. Certainly Confucians wanted to bring the whole world to goodness; however, they firmly upheld that one's benefice should be extended to others in degrees of intensity and in a priority sequence determined by family relationship, and by distance. Confucianism embraced the natural tendency (stemming from Heaven) of humans to prioritize family first before loving other parts of the community.<sup>35</sup> The Mohists on the other hand argued that to be a righteous person, an immanent propensity toward harmony within the

<sup>32</sup> de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 52.

<sup>33</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 233-234.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 232-233.

biological family must be rejected along with all other sorts of immanence.<sup>36</sup> Their idea was to make people more quickly embrace the entire world as one whole family by downplaying any intermediary cultural, political or social structures that may get in the way of this ideal.

Accordingly, it is written in the *Mozi*, “To obey the will of Heaven is to be universal and to oppose the will of Heaven is to be partial (in love). According to the doctrine of universality righteousness is the standard; in the doctrine of partiality force is the basis of government.”<sup>37</sup>

In their time period of increasing conquests between Chinese states and rising disdain for non-Chinese ones, they also argued about how Heaven’s intention for the arrangement of how the Son of Heaven should act towards the various members of the international order as its head. The trend of wandering intellectuals like Confucius in the late Zhou period being put into office and the decline of the aristocrat’s monopoly on government meant the reduction of the existing separation between social classes in terms of being perceived as capable of virtue and government. However, this applied mostly within and between the societies of the former Zhou vassals. Stratification by different cultures and social development in the late Zhou was instead increasingly applied between Chinese states in the central regions and the non-Chinese states of the peripheral “barbaric” East, West, South, and North.<sup>38</sup> In sections of the *Analects*, Confucius points to the cultural and political differences between the people in the central states (*zhongguo* 中國) and the surrounding “barbarians” in the peripheral corners of the known Chinese world.<sup>39</sup>

The Master said: "The Yi and Di barbarian tribes with rulers are not as viable as the various

<sup>36</sup> Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 143.

<sup>37</sup> *Mozi*.

<sup>38</sup> Erica Fox Brindley, *Ancient China and the Yue: Perceptions and Identities on the Southern Frontier, c.400 BCE-50 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 135-161.

<sup>39</sup> de Bary, Theodore, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 52.

Chinese states without them."<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the principles and moral worth *Tian* was supposed to bestow upon people were increasingly differentiated based on the level of civilization of the various countries in the international order.

Primarily, they relied on the two schools to decide whether offensive warfare was justified or not. With the increasing differentiation between civilized Chinese in the central states and barbarians in the periphery during this time, for the Confucians, their respective ideas of Heaven also informed the debate on partiality. Particularly with the justification of Mencius's theory of war, retaliatory conquests against barbarian states became a just, legitimate possibility of action for a Confucian ruler. By these conquests, the ruler would maintain the integrity of the state, stop invasions on the people, and bring knowledge of civilization to the conquered. The ruler would first help out his own subjects by conquering "barbarians" before moving on to help the "barbarians" that were now provided with education and food for their ultimate benefit. This justification derived from Confucianism was indeed used during the Han dynasty pacification of the Yue States.<sup>41</sup> However, the Mohist idea of universal love put in principle by Heaven would prevent conquest of any state from being justified by cultural conflict. For Mohists, the unique cultural development of the would-be conquered does not warrant conquest by an aggressive state, no matter what the would-be conqueror's perception of the "barbarian's" level of advanced civilization is.<sup>42</sup> For Mohism it would not be virtuous and benevolent to conduct warfare outside of defense, as vocally proclaimed by Mozi himself.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, one can once again observe the fundamental difference between Confucianism and Mohism on political legitimacy and the moral intent of the Heaven that provides it.

<sup>40</sup> Lau, *Confucius: the Analects: (Lun yü)*, 1-162.

<sup>41</sup> Brindley, *Ancient China and the Yue*, 135-161.

<sup>42</sup> Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, 265-272.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*



### About the author

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### Recommended citation

Kim, Sung Min. "Justification by Heaven: A Comparative Analysis of Political Legitimacy in Confucianism and Mohism." *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History* 8, no. 1 (April 2018).