

中国思想文化评论

# 孔學堂

CONFUCIAN ACADEMY



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阳明学普及及所注意的倾向 倪培民

朱子思想研究如何回归文本与问题？ 吴震

熊十力对阳明心学的承继与创发 蔡家和

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# 关于美国民众对儒学的认知与接受现状的实证调查与理论反思\*

□ 宋 斌 [美]本杰明·莆悌玉

**摘要:** 迄今为止,学界尚未就美国公众对于儒学的认知和态度开展过实证研究(empirical research)。为弥补这一缺憾,本文以问卷调查的方式开展了非理论、描述性的实证研究,并对调查结果进行分析,以期建立美国公众对于儒学认知现状的基本实证数据,并以此推动相关主题的进一步研究,为在美国普通民众及学术界中切实推广儒学提供指导。本文还从儒家哲学及历史发展的角度,对此实证调查结果及其应用前景进行了理论反思。

**关键词:** Ruism (“儒学”另译) Confucianism (“儒学”通译) 问卷调查 宗教 灵性生活 哲学

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## 一、导言 [见英文版第82页,下同]

在《波士顿儒家:晚期现代社会中可转移的传统》(*Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World*, 2000)一书中,南乐山(Robert C. Neville)主张儒学有可能对全球的哲学对话做出重要贡献。然而,尽管儒家学者在过去的二十年中取得了令人瞩目的研究成果,但是很多西方学院派哲学家仍旧拒绝将东方哲学引入西方学术主流。儒家学者要说服学术同僚认真对待儒学尚且如此困难,就不难理解为什么对非学术的普通民众如何看待儒学这一问题的关注这么少了。主要学术数据库(如Ebsco, Gale Academic, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Sage Journals)的搜索结果表明,目前还没有学者尝试评估西方公众对儒学的认知或态度。而促使我们弥补这一研究缺口的动因有两个。

首先,在过去几年中,一些儒家学者致力于通过各种媒体与大众分享儒学的理念和实践,例如,

\* 本文的理论研究成果得到了国际儒学联合会的资助,由第一作者在波士顿大学儒学社任职期间完成。其实证调查部分于2019年1月通过了美国IRB (Institutional Review Board)机构的伦理审查,实验号码SP-19-005。

① Bryan W. Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

通过主流出版社出版的书籍<sup>①</sup>，视频<sup>②</sup>，博客<sup>③</sup>，网站<sup>④</sup>，以及网络论坛<sup>⑤</sup>等。我们认为，如果能更全面地了解大众对于儒学的认知和态度，就能为如上这些儒学普及活动提供方向。而且，此类实证研究可以周期性地开展，以便评价此类儒学普及活动的进度和得失。

其次，本文所进行的研究能帮助人文学者在实证层面理解美国普通民众对于儒学的认知和态度。研究人员也可以通过分析这些数据来测试学者从人文科学的角度提出的种种假设。这些研究结果还可以帮助我们不断探讨如何将儒学及其他非西方哲学引入西方学术主流。

总之，本文问卷调查的目的是评估美国成年公众对于儒学的认知与接受现状。首先我们将说明调查研究方法及问卷样本，然后发布和分析调查结果，并为今后的研究提供建议。最后，我们还将就如何进一步提高美国公众对儒学的认知进行理论反思。

## 二、调查方法 [83]

由于这是首次对美国公众关于儒学的认知与态度的评估，本次问卷调查采取了一种非理论的研究路径。其研究目的是描述性的，而非检验某些假设。问卷调查中的问题最大限度地模拟了2018年《皮尤宗教图景调查》(Pew Religious Landscape Study)。<sup>⑥</sup>研究者可根据需要对这两个问卷调查进行有意义的比较。如果需要，我们可以提供与此次问卷调查相关的全部原始数据。

此次调查，我们选取了379名美国成年人，其人员构成尽量模拟美国的成年人口结构，置信区间为95%，误差率为5%。问卷受访者通过亚马逊的“土耳其机器人”(MTurk)平台募集，每次回应给予0.3美元的奖励。不过，在社会科学研究中使用MTurk系统模拟美国人口结构仍有些争议。需要指出的是，与美国成年人口的整体状况相比，MTurk的样本可能在某种程度上向无神论者(atheist)或不可知论者(agnostic)倾斜。<sup>⑦</sup>

此次调查的23个问题可以在附录A中查阅。其中11项人口统计相关参数(种族、年龄等)直接参照了2018年《皮尤宗教图景调查》，方便今后对这两个调查的结果进行比较研究。12项与美国公众对儒学的认知与态度相关的参数，也基本模仿了2018年《皮尤宗教图景调查》的类似项；第20和23项除外，这两项分别涉及儒学特定术语和人们学习儒学的兴趣。

## 三、调查结果 [84]

以下图表概括了此次调查的主要结果。全部单变量统计结果参见附录B。

① Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

② “Eastern Philosophy—Confucius,” YouTube video, posted by “The School of Life,” February 6, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUhGRh4vdb8&t=75s>; Bryan W. Van Norden, “Who Was Confucius?” YouTube video, posted by “Ted-ed,” October 27, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFt\\_VGG0kJU&t=5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFt_VGG0kJU&t=5s).

③ Bin Song (blog), *HuffPost*, <https://www.huffpost.com/author/binsong1981-695>.

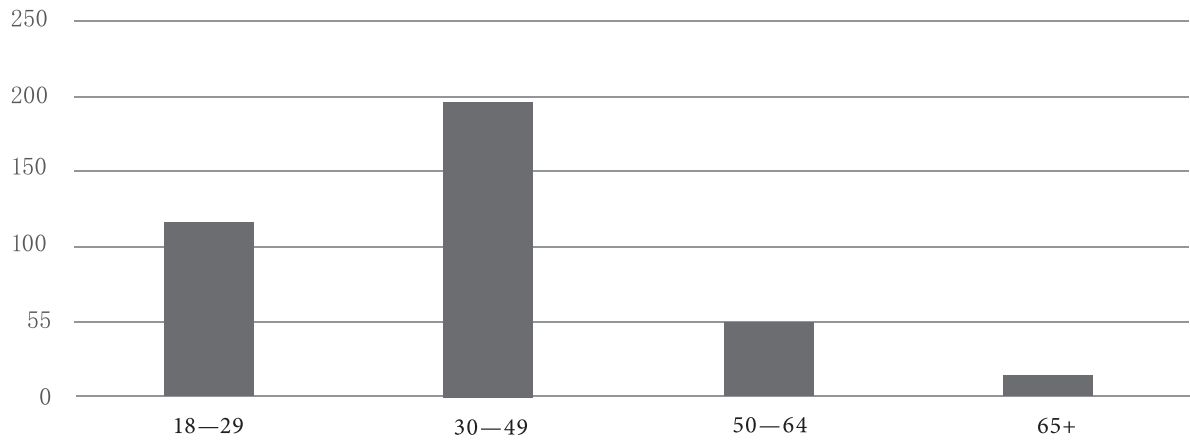
④ Benjamin L. Butina, *Stone Chimes—The Analects of Confucius*, accessed February 10, <http://stonechimes.com/>.

⑤ Friends from Afar: A Confucianism Group’s Facebook page, accessed February 10, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/confucian.friends/>.

⑥ Pew Research Center, “Religious Landscape Study,” accessed February 10, 2019, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>.

⑦ Martin J. Burnham, Yen K. Le, and Ralph L. Piedmont, “Who is MTurk? Personal Characteristics and Sample Consistency of These Online Workers,” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 21, no. 9–10 (2018): 934–944.

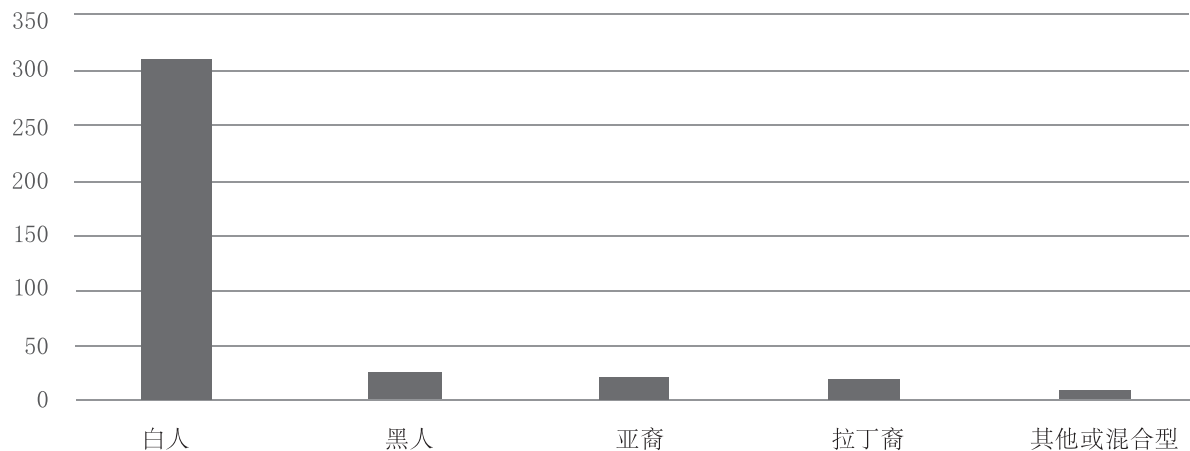
## (一) 所采集样本的人口统计信息 [84]



图一 年龄



图二 性别

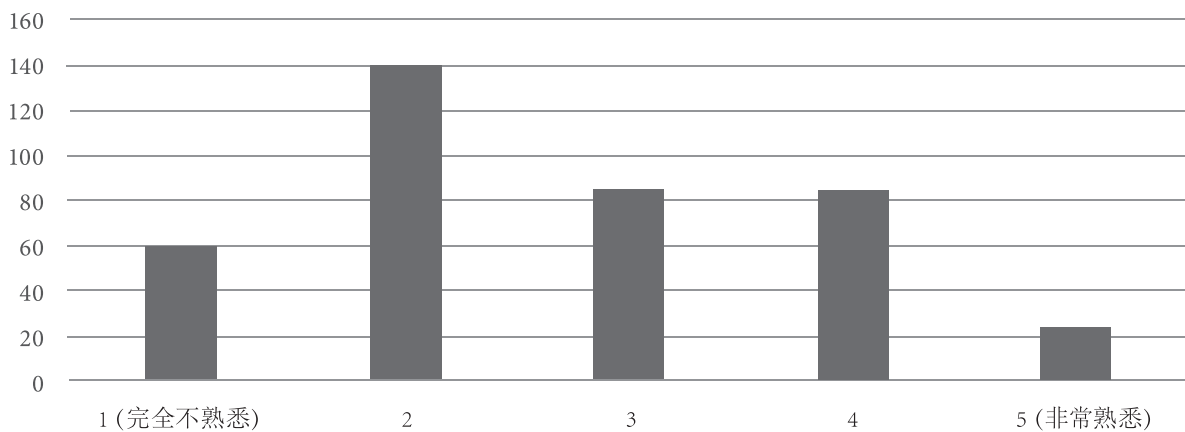


图三 种族

上图所列人口种族的具体百分比, 以及所采集样本的其他人口统计信息(如婚姻、教育、家庭收入、居住地、政治理念、政党、信仰、宗教归属)等, 参见附录B。

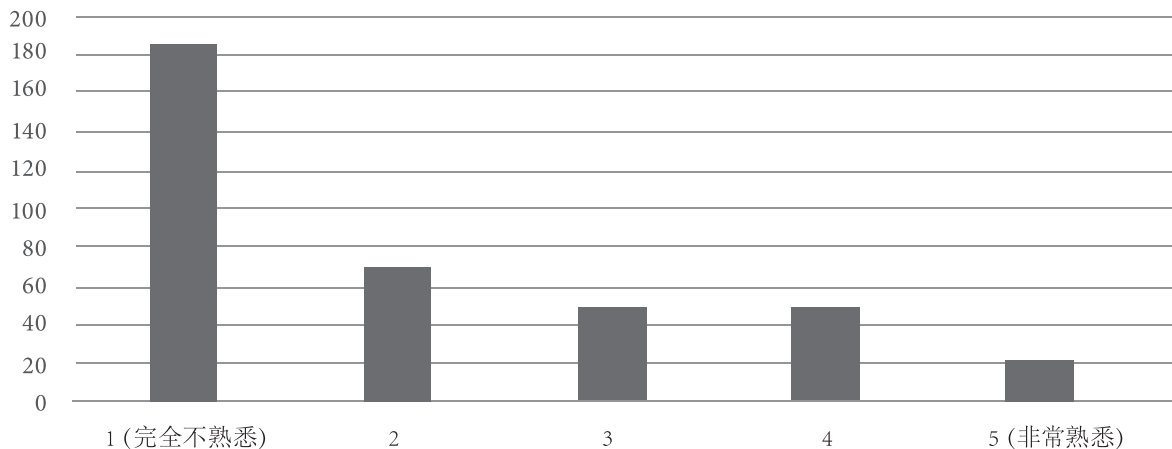
## (二) 对Confucianism (“儒学”通译) 以及相关概念的熟悉程度 [85]

绝大多数受访者对Confucianism的熟悉程度为“低”或“一般”。15%的受访者完全不熟悉儒学, 6%自称对儒学传统非常熟悉。



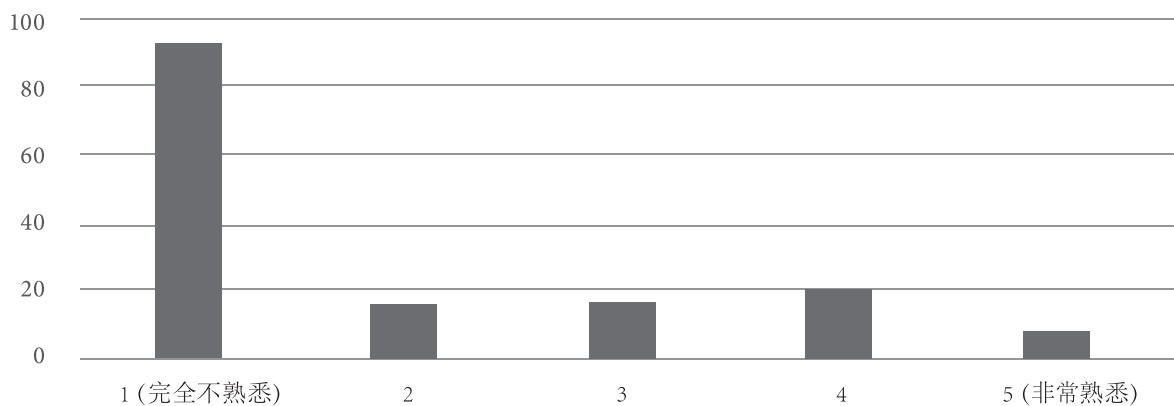
图四 对Confucianism的熟悉程度

49%的受访者对宋明理学 (Neo-Confucianism) 完全不熟悉, 6%非常熟悉。



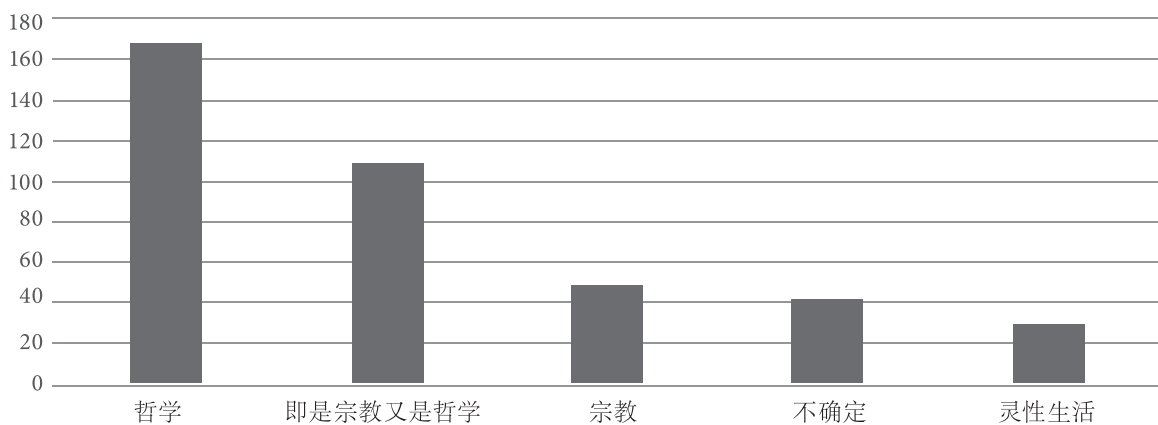
图五 对宋明理学的熟悉程度

60%的受访者称自己对Ruism（“儒学”另译）<sup>①</sup>完全不熟悉。6%非常熟悉。



图六 对Ruism的熟悉程度

42%的受访者将儒学的总体性质界定为“哲学”。27%的人认为它“既是宗教又是哲学”，即宗教与哲学的结合。较少受访者将儒学界定为“宗教”（13%）或“灵性生活”（7%）。有11%的人并不清楚如何界定儒学。

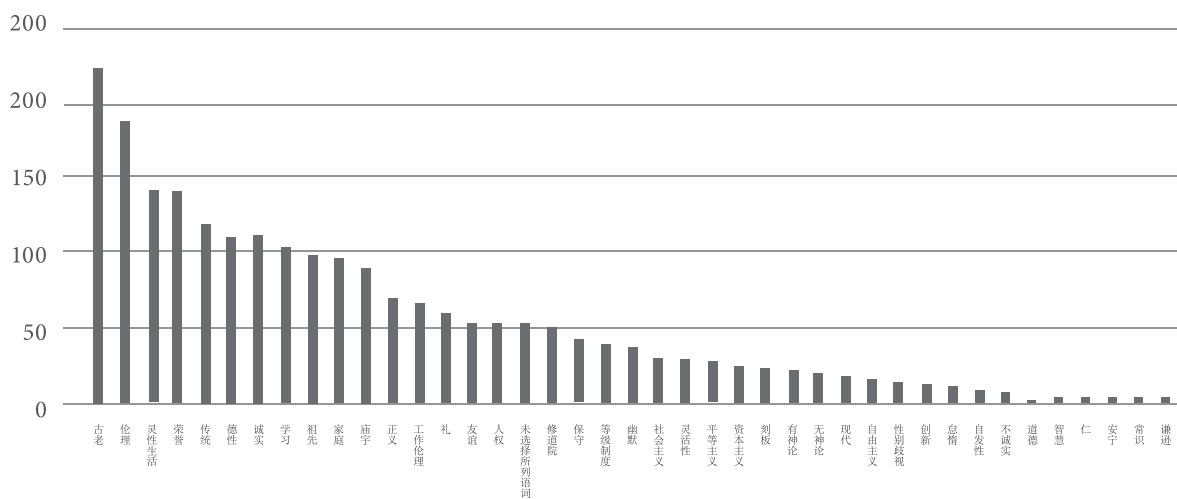


图七 对儒学的总体性质的界定

<sup>①</sup> Ruism在英语中常常被写作Confucianism,两者都指称“儒学”或“儒家传统”。但是,学者们逐渐注意到,Confucianism(直译为“孔夫子教”)实际上是对“儒学”的一个错误的英译。将儒学译为“Confucianism”,是由早期的基督教传教士们以宗教比较与归信信众为目的完成的;在类似的历史背景中,伊斯兰教曾被翻译为“Muhammadanism”(穆罕默德教)。为了在命名非西方传统的过程中去殖民化,英语学界已出现很强的声音呼吁用Ruism来代替Confucianism。而我们认为,Ruism是更能忠实地表明“儒学”在汉语语境中内涵的准确译名。学者们对此问题的讨论,可以参见Stephen C. Angle,“Should We Use ‘Ruism’ Instead of ‘Confucianism’?,” *Warp, Weft, and Way* (blog), May 4, 2016, <http://warpweftandway.com/should-instead-confucianism/>,以及 Tony Swain, *Confucianism in China: An Introduction* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 3-22。在本文的英文原稿中,与“去殖民化”的精神相契,行文中我们用Ruism来代替Confucianism,用Ruist或Ru来代替Confucian。由于在现有的英文文献及大众话语中存在两个名字指称同一个传统,所以我们在调查问卷中也设计了相应的问题来测评美国大众对儒学的认知与态度。



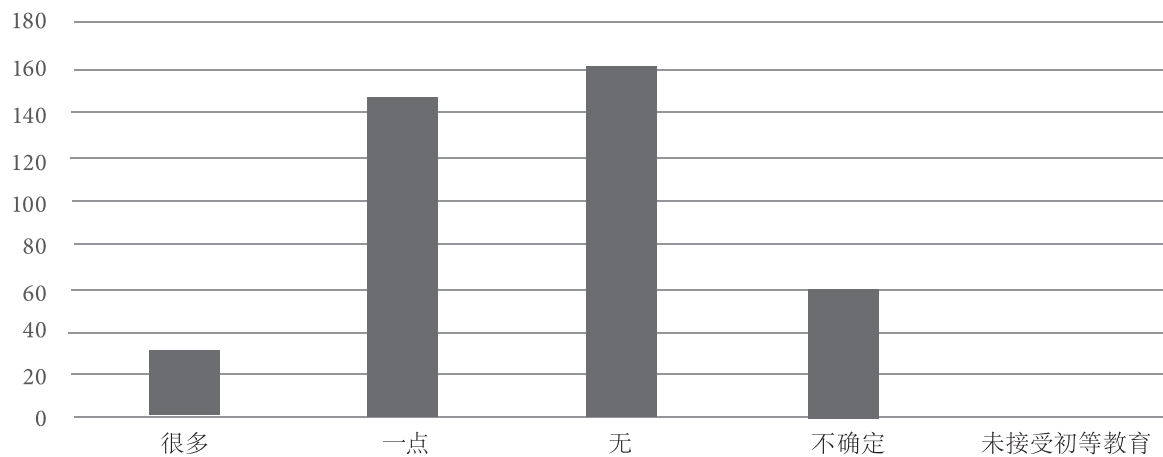
提到儒学,受访者最常联想到的词语或概念依次为“古老”(60%),“伦理”(50%),“灵性生活”(37%),“荣誉”(37%),“传统”(32%)。在所提供的语词中,与儒学关联最少的词语或概念依次为“性别歧视”(4%),“创新”(3%),“怠惰”(3%),“自发性”(2%),“不诚实”(2%)。



图八 儒学相关的语词与概念

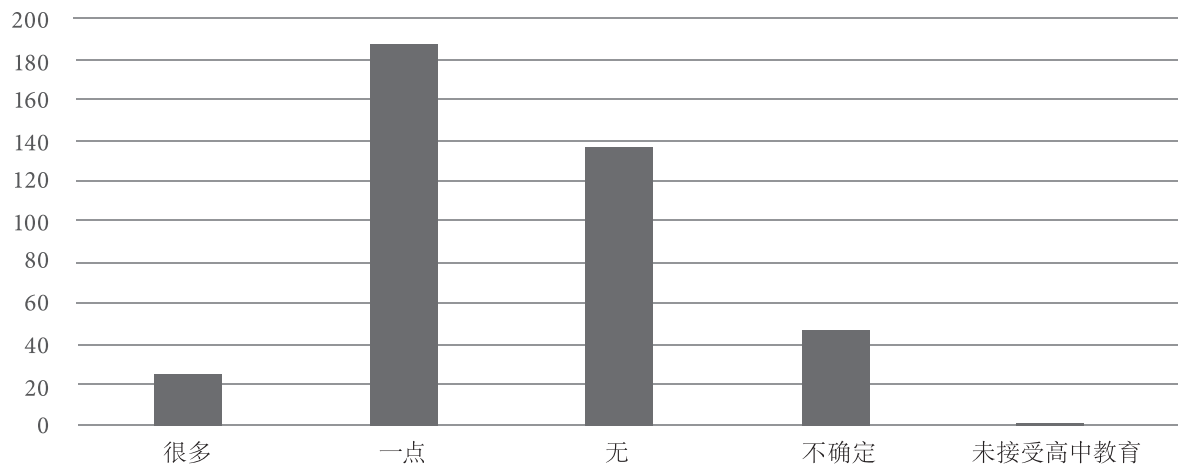
### (三) 回顾对儒学的学习经验 [87]

绝大多数的受访者(41%)不记得在初等教育(小学及初中)阶段学习过儒学。大约有7%的人记得在这个阶段曾学到很多儒学。



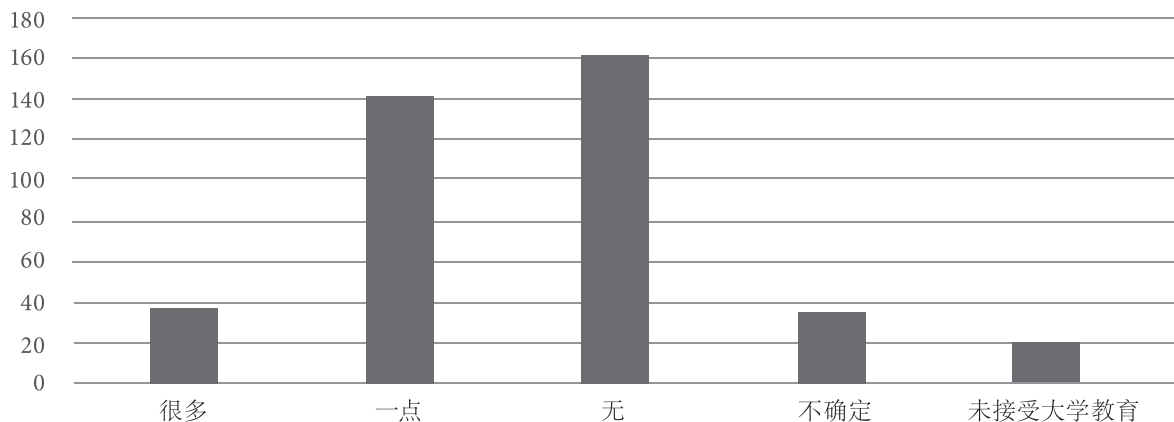
图九 关于在初等教育阶段学习儒学的回忆

很多受访者(47%)记得在高中学过一点儒学;但也有很大比例(34%)的受访者不记得在高中阶段学习过任何儒学知识。



图十 关于在高中学习儒学的回忆

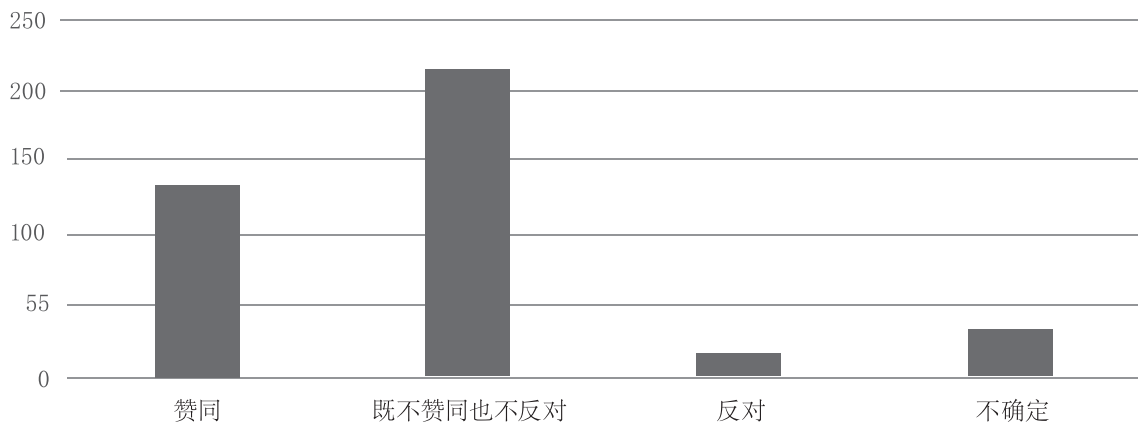
42%的受访者不记得在大学阶段学习过儒学。也有相当比例(36%)的受访者记得学过一点儒学。



图十一 关于在大学学习儒学的回忆

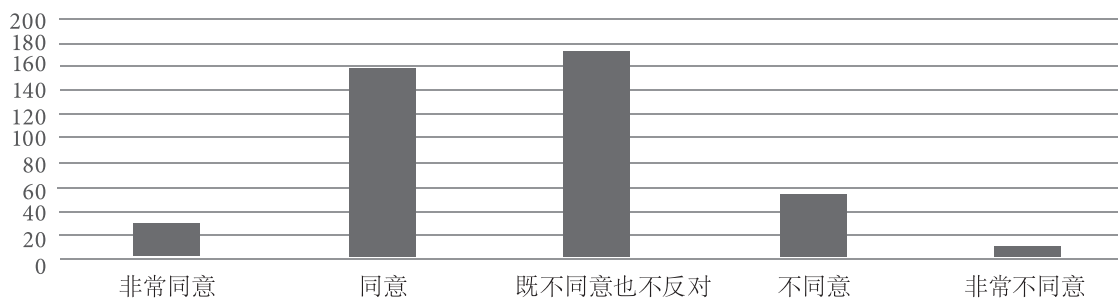
#### (四) 对儒学的态度 [88]

大多数受访者(54%)对儒学的态度是中性的(既不赞同也不反对)。较少受访者(4%)对儒学持反对态度,约有9%的受访者不确定自己的态度。



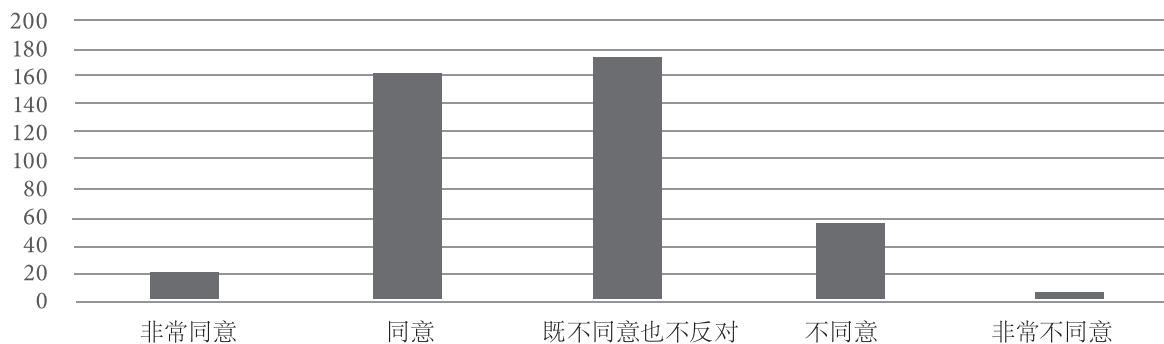
图十二 对儒学的总体印象

很多受访者 (41%) 既不同意也不反对“儒学与21世纪的美国人相关”这一观点。大约44%的人同意或非常同意这一观点, 约有15%的人不同意或非常不同意这一观点。



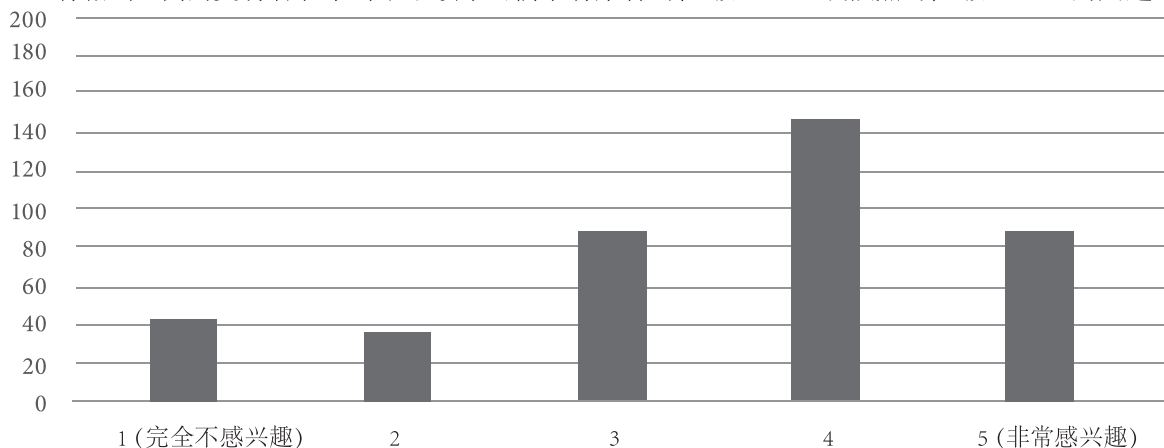
图十三 对“儒学与21世纪的美国人相关”这一观点的认可程度

与关于前一个问题的回答一致, 很多受访者 (41%) 既不同意也不反对“儒学对于21世纪的美国人来说是一种有价值的世界观”这一观点。值得注意的是, 大约44%的受访者同意或非常同意这一观点。约16%的人不同意或非常不同意这一观点。



图十四 对“儒学对于21世纪的美国人来说是一种有价值的世界观”的认可程度

有相当比例的受访者表示对于继续学习儒学有某种 (第4级, 36%) 或强烈 (第5级, 23%) 的兴趣。



图十五 继续学习儒学的兴趣水平

各调查项的详细信息 (包括百分比), 详见附件B。

#### 四、数据分析 [89]

由于样本结构十分接近美国人口结构，我们可以作如下人格素描来概括此次调查结果的平均值：一个统计学意义上的普通美国人认为自己了解儒学（Confucianism），但对宋明理学或儒学的另一译名Ruism并不熟悉。他（或她）记得在高中学过一点儒学，但是在初等教育或大学阶段则学得很少或没有学过。他（或她）认为儒学是一种哲学而非宗教，但具有宗教的或灵性的维度，还认为儒学是一门古老的学问，涉及伦理、灵性生活、德性与荣誉等问题。他（或她）对于“儒学与21世纪的美国人相关”这个观点持中性态度，但愿意学习更多关于儒学的知识。

大多数受访者表示至少在一定程度上愿意学习更多儒学知识，这对于儒学普及者来说是个具有鼓励性的结果。而且调查结果显示，尽管受访者对于儒家传统的知识有限，但基本上是准确的。更重要的是，有相当比例的受访者对“儒学对21世纪的美国人来说是一种有价值的世界观”这一观点抱有开放态度。大多数受访者不记得在正规教育中学过儒学或记得所学很少，不过很多人表示有兴趣学习更多儒学——儒家学者们对此或许不会感到惊讶。

##### （一）局限性 [89]

如前所论，通过MTurk平台所采集样本的代表性是有争议的。Burbham及其同事指出，与美国的总体人口相比，MTurk系统中的受访者在一定程度上更可能是无神论或不可知论者。<sup>①</sup>尽管此次调查并未研究有神论者与对儒学的态度之间的关系，我们有理由提出如下猜想，如果样本更具代表性，对于儒学的态度是否会比现有样本更消极、或更不愿接受呢？

##### （二）对今后研究的建议 [90]

本文的引言部分曾提到此次研究的目的是描述性的。但是我们建议对于当前数据采用以理论为导向的研究。特别是，不同人口成分对于儒学的认知与态度是很有潜力的研究方向。将本研究的发现与2018《皮尤宗教图景调查》的结果进行比较也会有所收获。本调研还须定期持续进行，由此可以测评美国公众对儒学的认知和态度的社会变化。后续问卷调查应当选取更有代表意义的样本。

#### 五、儒学理论家下一步该怎么做？ [90]

我们相信，此次问卷调查及结果分析对于儒学理论家的工作具有极为重要的意义，可以帮助他们思考接下来该采取什么措施来增加美国民众对儒学的认知程度。但是，对这一问题进行理论反思之前，我们需要讨论本文开头提到的儒学普及问题。

相比于其他中国古代传统，儒学很难普及或流行化。儒学不像道家那样有一个容易上手的文本——《道德经》的野性神秘主义之论几乎对任何水平的英文读者都能产生吸引力。儒学也不像佛教那样有独立的寺庙体系，可以在一个安全的宗教环境中集中宣讲义理。作为古代中国文明中最积极入世的传统，儒学首先关心的是提供一种公共伦理规范，使所有人和谐地生活在一起。因此，儒学的核心关切可以说是建构——而非解构——与文明发展密切相关的习俗、技术和制度，使文明在变化及演进的过程中达到和谐。儒学的这种建构精神当然并不妨碍其对人类文明中非人性的方面进行批判或

<sup>①</sup> Burnham, Le, and Piedmont, "Who is MTurk? Personal Characteristics and Sample Consistency of These Online Workers," 934-944.

解构,但也不会将解构优先于建构。因此,要准确理解儒学,我们不但要理解儒学的哲学体系本身,还需要了解这些哲学原则所作用的既定文明的历史与社会细节。而且,如果想将儒学从其原生的文化土壤中剥离并移植到另一片文化土壤上,还须付出极大努力去学习新的文明形态的历史与社会的各个方面。移植的目的是在儒学原则的指导下改善并增加这个新文明的和谐度,而这些儒学原则曾在其他文明中发挥过积极作用。这也意味着,儒学在当今美国社会的普及从本质上来说是一个激发、改善与逐步发展的过程,而非以一种乌托邦式的断裂理想来打破现有的社会秩序。我们可以将儒学的这种社会改造理想描述为“在连续性中螺旋上升”,它与孔子所主张的“述而不作”(《论语·述而》)精神是一致的。要知道,孔子并非不创新,他只是在传承的过程中创新。

但是当今又有哪位大儒可以同时全面了解中华文明与美国文明的历史与社会的各个方面呢?前者历经了2500多年未间断的复杂演化,后者则在植根于古希腊历史文明的同时,拥有多元文化的强大力量!中美文明各自的复杂程度说明了在美国普及儒学的难度。正是由于这些挑战,过去几十年里,尽管如前文所述已经进行了诸多尝试,汉语与英语世界的儒学学术与公共话语中出现了两极分化的现象:在公共领域,(1)要么在普及过程中扭曲了儒学基本义理,(2)要么是学术作品过于艰深,以致于对公共舆论的影响几乎为零。况且,现代高等教育的制度惰性还会加重这种两极分化,例如,学术评估系统倾向于轻视学术界以外的普及作品,而大众社会则倾向于将(人文领域的)学术作品看作是学究以及不实用的。

尽管如此,如果了解历史上儒学成功推广的先例,我们会发现在当今社会普及儒学的前景不该如此黯淡。且以两本在中世纪及近代儒学发展中最具影响力的著作——朱熹的《四书章句集注》及其与吕祖谦共同编纂的《近思录》为例。考虑到儒学经典令人生畏的复杂性与深刻性,朱熹选取了《礼记》中的两个短篇以及记录两位古代儒家圣人(孔子、孟子)言行的《论语》和《孟子》,编纂成新的儒家经典——“四书”。他对这些经典进行了更新的详细注解——甚至标注了生僻字的发音。朱熹不但将这些浓缩的经典当作学习更深奥儒家经典的入门,还精心编排了四书的顺序,将每一本作为前一本的进阶。与此类似,《近思录》包含了朱熹同时代的四位著名儒家士大夫的语录与作品节选,按不同的范畴加以编排,并附加了编者的注解。朱熹希望儒学初学者可以通过思考这些当代杰出人士的言行,找到理解古老儒学教义的门径。我们暂且不讨论朱熹的这些普及性著作获得成功有哪些社会原因(如新的印刷技术、城市经济的繁荣、多国并立的政治环境等),只看朱熹的学术作品本身的独特性:由一位对古代儒家经典有系统理解的真正的儒家大师编纂,且有特定的读者群——对儒学感兴趣但不甚了解的初学者。毋庸置疑,这是儒学普及和流行的一个成功案例。

朱熹对儒学义理的普及为我们在当今美国社会推广儒学提供了参考经验。如朱熹的普及性著作所示,儒学在美国的成功普及也应克服前文提到的两极分化现象:预期的普及应当在对儒家哲学和历史具有全面学术了解的基础上进行,与此同时,还应对当代美国受众的生存状况抱有理解和同感。毕竟,儒学传统总是将社会各层面的“和谐”当作终极理想,此外我们还能有其他追求吗?这的确是一个很高的要求,但毋庸置疑,这个兼顾学术水准与受众需要的普及化理想是值得追求的。对普及性问题作出反思后,接下来我们回到问卷调查的结果及其分析。

根据调查数据,一个普通美国人面临着与朱熹的时代同样的问题:他(或她)对儒学感兴趣,但却不太懂。这对于儒学理论家来说无疑是个好消息。此外,有很大比例(44%)的受访者对于“儒学对21世纪的美国人来说可以是一种有价值的世界观”这一观点持开放态度,当然也必须了解,这种乐观

态度可能是建立在对儒学的有限认知上。

为什么一个普通美国人对儒学感兴趣,了解不多,却对儒学在美国的未来抱有乐观态度?我们可以从调查数据本身找到答案。图八列举了与儒学相关联的语词与概念,其中排在前十的是:古老、伦理、灵性生活、荣誉、传统、德性、诚实、学习、祖先、家庭。世界上哪个国家不愿将这些特质纳入自己的时代精神中呢?从图上来看,一些负面词汇的排位靠后,如刻板、性别歧视、等级制度等,对此儒学理论家们可能会感到释然。在过去的几十年里,一些儒家学者致力于纠正民众对于儒学的误解甚至扭曲。我们认为这些误解与扭曲主要是受到了近代中国(如五四运动和新文化运动期间)激进的反儒家话语的影响。但根据此次问卷调查,普通美国人对儒学的了解非常有限,而且并不会将那些负面的词汇与儒学联系起来。这对于儒学理论家将受众从亚洲转移到普通美国人是一种优势:既然儒学在美国鲜为人知,那么前代的亚洲激进知识分子对于儒学的偏见与不实指控产生的影响也就较小。这是个很好的机会,可以将真正的儒学推介给新听众,由此我们也有理由期望并致力于一个受儒学影响的新和谐时代的美国社会。

图八还呈现出另一个令人鼓舞的信息,人们更多地由儒学联想到“灵性生活”而非“有神论”或“无神论”。这可以跟另一点联系起来看,即大多数受访者将儒学总体界定为哲学而非宗教,或者某种哲学与宗教的混合体。我们可以做如下解读:大多数美国人认为,不太好按照社会上既定的宗教概念去思考儒学;儒学可看作一种具有整合性的世界观,能为人类生活的主要方面提供意义和指导,在这个意义上,儒学具有丰富的宗教的或灵性的维度。以上讨论对于将儒家思想系统地引入美国学术界也有启发,即必须相应修改对于“哲学”或“宗教”的先入之见,并可能由此产生理论上的创新。如果将儒学引入哲学领域,那么更应将哲学看作一种整全的生活方式,而非仅仅作为一种论辩性思考的理性方式。如果将儒学引入宗教研究领域,那么就应使宗教脱离文本或个人的神启、神祇崇拜、牧师阶层、非世俗的宗教建制等观念。与此相对,“宗教”更多地指个人或团体的灵性生活、合理有效的日常人类活动、学术的批判性思维等。

根据这些数据,儒学理论家下一步应当怎么做?

考虑到儒学的历史、哲学以及当下公众理解中所体现的儒学精神的独特性,我们认为不应将儒学主要看作一种宗教。因此,假如将儒学作为“世界宗教”的一元来复兴,使其在美国社会和政治架构所允许的宗教机构中发展,这种道路也是行不通的。为了让儒学造福美国社会,儒学理论家首先需要关注公共教育机构,以及相关的家庭、社区和工作等环境。总体上,这些机构和环境可以被称作是“世俗的”,不同于那些典型的独立宗教机构;不过也需要谨记,在儒学中,“宗教”与“世俗”之间的界限并不太清楚。受以上数据启发,对于儒学理论家来说最可行也最迫切的任务是设计出儒学相关的系统课程,以应用于公共教育的小学、初中、高中以及大学的各个阶段。鉴于美国儒家学者绝大多数在大学院校中工作,这个任务可以更加具体为设计出适用于大学教育的系统儒学课程。根据问卷调查的结果,设计这些课程的时候,应涵盖经典儒家以及儒学在各个时期各个地域的表现形态(包括“宋明理学”)。此外,设计课程时还应认真考虑Confucianism与Ruism之间的差别——以及历史上儒学与西方世界相互影响的相关问题。

最后,需要强调的是,无论怎样量化地设想儒学在美国的普及化,我们仍然要将成为儒者典范作为从事这一事业的资格考验。成为儒者,就需要接受综合教育,具有文化深度,能运用人类文明的所有相关成果在不断变化演进的社会中创造持久的和谐。因此,儒学能否在普通美国人中普及取决于

能否培养出更多的活跃于美国社会各个领域的儒者，他们的知识和技能来自儒学及其他相关人类文明成果。

### 附录A [93]

1. 您的年龄? (18—29, 30—49, 50—64, 65+)
2. 您的性别? (男性, 女性)
3. 您的种族? (白人, 黑人, 亚裔, 拉丁裔, 其他及混合型)
4. 您当前的婚姻状况? (已婚, 与伴侣同居, 离异或分居, 丧偶, 未婚)
5. 您的最高学历? (高中或更低, 大学肄业, 大学本科, 研究生或相关职业学历)
6. 您的家庭年收入? (\$30000以下, \$30000—\$49999, \$50000—\$99999, \$100000及以上)
7. 您的居住区域类型? (城市, 城市郊区, 小城镇, 乡村)
8. 您的政治理念? (保守派, 中间派, 自由派, 不确定)
9. 您认同哪个政党? (共和党或倾向于共和党, 无党派倾向, 民主党或倾向于民主党)
10. 您对于上帝的态度? (非常确定上帝的存在, 比较确定上帝的存在, 不太确定或完全不确定上帝的存在, 不知道自己是否确定上帝存在, 不信仰上帝, 其他或不知道是否相信上帝)
11. 您的宗教归属? [基督教福音派新教, 基督教主流新教, 基督教传统黑人新教, 基督教天主教, 基督教摩门教, 基督教东正教, 基督教耶和華见证会, 其他基督教, 犹太教, 穆斯林, 佛教, 印度教, 无归属(或称“无教派”), 其他]
12. 您对儒学 (Confucianism) 有多熟悉? (以1到5为等级, 1为完全不熟悉, 5为非常熟悉)
13. 您对宋明理学有多熟悉? (以1到5为等级, 1为完全不熟悉, 5为非常熟悉)
14. 您对儒学 (Ruism) 有多熟悉? (以1到5为等级, 1为完全不熟悉, 5为非常熟悉)
15. 您在初等教育中学过多少儒学? (很多, 一点, 无, 不确定, 未接受初等教育)
16. 您在高中学过多少儒学? (很多, 一点, 无, 不确定, 未接受高中教育)
17. 您在大学学过多少儒学? (很多, 一点, 无, 不确定, 未接受大学教育)
18. 您对儒学的态度? (赞同, 既不赞同也不反对, 反对)
19. 根据现有知识, 您怎样描述儒学的总体性质? (宗教, 哲学, 既是宗教又是哲学, 灵性生活, 不确定, 其他)
20. 您认为以下哪些语词或概念与儒学相关? (古老, 祖先, 无神论, 资本主义, 不诚实, 保守, 平等主义, 伦理, 家庭, 灵活性, 友谊, 等级制度, 荣誉, 人权, 诚实, 幽默, 创新, 正义, 怠惰, 学习, 自由主义, 现代, 修道院, 刻板, 礼, 性别歧视, 灵性生活, 自发性, 社会主义, 庙宇, 有神论, 传统, 德性, 工作伦理, 未选择所列语词)
21. 您是否赞同以下陈述? “儒学与21世纪的美国人相关。” (非常同意, 同意, 既不同意也不反对, 不同意, 非常不同意)
22. 您是否赞同以下陈述? “儒学对于21世纪的美国人来说是一种有价值的世界观。” (非常同意, 同意, 既不同意也不反对, 不同意, 非常不同意)
23. 您对于学习更多儒学知识有多感兴趣? (以1到5为等级, 1为完全不感兴趣, 5为非常感兴趣)

附录B 单变量统计结果<sup>[94]</sup>

表1 年龄

	<i>n</i>	%
18—29	116	30.6
30—49	197	52
50—64	52	13.7
65+	14	3.7

表2 性别

	<i>n</i>	%
男	223	58.8
女	156	41.2

表3 种族

	<i>n</i>	%
白人	309	81.5
黑人	23	6.1
亚裔	20	5.3
拉丁裔	20	5.3
其他或混合型	7	1.8

表4 婚姻状况

	<i>n</i>	%
已婚	203	53.4
与伴侣同居	29	7.6
离异或分居	28	7.4
丧偶	5	1.3
未婚	115	30.4

表5 教育程度

	<i>n</i>	%
高中或更低	25	6.6
大学肄业	99	26
大学本科	166	43.6
研究生或相关职业学历	91	23.9

表6 家庭收入

	<i>n</i>	%
\$30000 以下	79	20.7
\$30000—\$49999	108	28.3
\$50000—\$99999	143	37.5
\$100000 及以上	51	13.4



表7 居住地类型

	<i>n</i>	%
城市	140	36.5
城市郊区	158	41.4
小城镇	39	10.2
乡村	46	12

表8 政治理念

	<i>n</i>	%
保守派	101	26.2
中间派	93	24.2
自由派	184	47.8
不确定	7	1.8

表9 政党倾向

	<i>n</i>	%
共和党或倾向于共和党	138	35.8
无党派倾向	49	12.7
民主党或倾向于民主党	198	51.4

表10 关于上帝的信仰

	<i>n</i>	%
非常确定上帝的存在	149	38.6
比较确定上帝的存在	82	21.2
不太确定或完全不确定上帝的存在	35	9.1
不知道自己是否确定上帝存在	32	8.3
不信仰上帝	64	16.6
其他或不知道是否相信上帝	24	6.2

表11 宗教归属

	<i>n</i>	%
基督教福音派新教	41	10.6
基督教主流新教	39	10.1
基督教传统黑人新教	4	1
基督教天主教	108	27.8
基督教摩门教	2	1.2
基督教东正教	4	1
基督教耶和華见证会	0	0
其他基督教	26	6.7
犹太教	7	0.2
穆斯林	5	1.3
佛教	9	1.9
印度教	6	1.5
无归属(或无教派)	120	30.9
其他	19	0.05

表12 对儒学 (Confucianism) 的熟悉程度

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (完全不熟悉)	59	15.1
2	139	35.5
3	85	21.7
4	85	21.7
5 (非常熟悉)	24	6.3

表13 对宋明理学的熟悉程度

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (完全不熟悉)	186	49.1
2	69	18.2
3	50	13.2
4	50	13.2
5 (非常熟悉)	24	6.3

表14 对儒学 (Ruism) 的熟悉程度

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (完全不熟悉)	235	59.5
2	41	10.4
3	45	11.4
4	50	12.6
5 (非常熟悉)	25	6.3

表 15 关于在初等教育中学习儒学的回忆

	<i>n</i>	%
很多	29	7.3
一点	146	30.1
无	161	40.8
不确定	59	14.9
未接受初等教育	0	0

表16 关于在高中学习儒学的回忆

	<i>n</i>	%
很多	25	6.3
一点	188	47.4
无	136	34.3
不确定	47	11.8
未接受高中教育	1	0.3

表17 关于在大学学习儒学的回忆

	<i>n</i>	%
很多	36	9.1
一点	143	36
无	165	41.6
不确定	32	8.1
未接受大学教育	21	5.3

表18 对儒学的态度

	<i>n</i>	%
赞同	132	33.1
既不赞同也不反对	215	53.9
反对	17	4.3
不确定	35	8.8

表 19 对儒学总体性质的归类

	<i>n</i>	%
宗教	50	12.5
哲学	168	42.1
既是宗教又是哲学	109	27.3
灵性生活	28	7
不确定	44	11

表20 与儒学关联的语词与概念

	<i>n</i>	%
古老	227	59.9
伦理	190	50.1
灵性生活	141	37.2
荣誉	141	37.2
传统	120	31.7
德性	112	29.6
诚实	112	29.6
学习	104	27.4
祖先	98	25.9
家庭	97	25.6
庙宇	90	23.7
正义	70	18.5
工作伦理	67	17.7
礼	61	16.1
友谊	55	14.5
人权	54	14.2
修道院	51	13.5
保守	44	11.6
等级制度	40	10.6
幽默	36	9.5
社会主义	31	8.2
灵活性	29	7.7
平等主义	29	7.7
资本主义	25	6.6
刻板	23	6.1
有神论	21	5.5
无神论	20	5.3
现代	18	4.7
自由主义	16	4.2
性别歧视	15	4.0
创新	13	3.4
怠惰	10	2.6
自发性	9	2.4
不诚实	7	1.8

(接上表)

未选择所列语词	48	12.6
其他(受访者提供)		
智慧	1	0.2
仁	1	0.2
安宁	1	0.2
常识	1	0.2
谦逊	1	0.2

表21 儒学与21世纪的美国人相关

	<i>n</i>	%
非常同意	36	9
同意	140	35.1
既不同意也不反对	164	41.1
不同意	48	12
非常不同意	11	2.8

表22 儒学可以作为21世纪美国人的一种有价值的世界观

	<i>n</i>	%
非常同意	27	6.4
同意	159	37.7
既不同意也不反对	172	40.8
不同意	53	12.6
非常不同意	11	2.6

表23 对继续学习儒学的兴趣

	<i>n</i>	%
1(完全不感兴趣)	40	10
2	36	9
3	88	22.1
4	145	36.3
5(非常感兴趣)	90	22.6

(责任编辑:黄艳 责任校对:刘光炎)

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# CONFUCIAN ACADEMY

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CHINESE THOUGHT  
AND CULTURE REVIEW

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# An Empirical Study and Theoretical Reflection on the Knowledge and Perceptions of Ruism in the United States\*

Song Bin\*\* and Benjamin L. Butina\*\*\*

**Abstract:** To date, no empirical research has been conducted to assess American public knowledge of, and attitudes toward Ruism. This paper presents and discusses the results of an atheoretical, descriptive survey study that addresses this gap. An empirical baseline of public knowledge and perceptions of Ruism in the U.S. is therefore established to inform further research and to guide practical efforts of promoting Ruism among the general public and academia. The study concludes with a theoretical reflection upon the results and their potential application from the perspectives of Ruist philosophy and history.

**Keywords:** Ruism, Confucianism, survey, religion, spirituality, philosophy

## Introduction [Refer to page 75 for Chinese. Similarly hereinafter]

In *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (2000), Robert C. Neville argued that Ruism<sup>1</sup> has the potential to make significant contributions to the global philosophical conversation. Yet, despite the impressive intellectual achievements of Ruist scholars over the past two decades, many Western academic philosophers resist

\* Part of this research is funded by a gift endowed by the International Confucian Association to the Confucian Association of Boston University at 2018. Its empirical research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in January of 2019 with an assigned experimental number SP-19-005.

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1 Ruism is often referred to as *Confucianism* in English-speaking countries. However, scholars are realizing “Confucianism” is a misnomer devised by early Christian missionaries to refer to the Ru (儒) tradition with a primary purpose of religious comparison and conversion, just as Islam was once called “Muhammadanism” in a similar historical context of Western colonialism. To decolonize the nomenclature of non-Western traditions, there is a strong naming trend in current English scholarship to replace Confucianism with “Ruism,” a term more accurate to the original Chinese context of the designated tradition. About this naming trend, please refer to Stephen C. Angle, “Should We Use ‘Ruism’ Instead of ‘Confucianism?’,” *Warp, Weft, and Way* (blog), May 4, 2016, <http://warpweftandway.com/should-instead-confucianism/>, and Tony Swain, *Confucianism in China: An Introduction* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 3–22. For the cause of decolonization, we employ “Ruism” to replace “Confucianism,” and “Ruist” or “Ru” to replace “Confucian” in this paper. However, since there are now two English names to refer to the same tradition, we used both “Ruism” and “Confucianism” in the conducted survey.



the incorporation of Eastern philosophies into the Western academic mainstream.<sup>2</sup> Considering the difficulty Ruist scholars have faced in persuading their academic colleagues to take Ruism seriously, it is unsurprising that relatively little attention has been paid to the perceptions of non-academics. Indeed, a search of relevant academic databases (e.g., Ebsco, Gale Academic, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Sage Journals) reveals no evidence of attempts to assess the Western public's knowledge of, or attitudes toward Ruism. There are two main reasons to address this gap.

First, over the past several years, some Ruist scholars have been engaged in sharing Ruist ideas and practices with the general public through books in the popular press,<sup>3</sup> videos,<sup>4</sup> blogs,<sup>5</sup> websites,<sup>6</sup> and online discussion forums.<sup>7</sup> A better understanding of public knowledge and attitudes concerning Ruism may help inform these efforts. In addition, this measure can be repeated periodically to assess the success of these attempts at popularization.

Second, this study will provide humanities scholars with an empirical understanding of the knowledge and attitudes of the U.S. public concerning Ruism. This dataset can also be analyzed by researchers who wish to test hypotheses generated from within the humanities. Finally, these findings may prove useful in the ongoing efforts to incorporate Ruist and other non-Western philosophies into the Western academic mainstream.

The purpose of this survey study, therefore, is to assess public perceptions and knowledge of Ruism among American adults. A review of the method and sample will be followed by a presentation of results, a discussion of the findings, recommendations for future research, and conclude with a theoretical reflection on what we should do next in order to increase public awareness of Ruism in the U.S..

## Method <sup>[76]</sup>

Because this survey represents the first attempt to assess public knowledge and attitudes regarding Ruism in the U.S., an atheoretical survey approach was selected. The goal of this study is descriptive and no hypotheses were tested. The survey items were modeled, as closely as possible, on the Pew Religious Landscape Study (2018)<sup>8</sup> so that researchers may make meaningful comparisons between the two surveys, if desirable. The complete dataset will be made available to interested scholars.

A total of 379 American adults were selected for the survey, which approximates a reasonable representation of the U.S. adult population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The respondents were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platform and incentivized with a payment of \$0.3. The use of MTurk samples to approximate the U.S. population is somewhat controversial in the social sciences. For the

2 Bryan W. Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

3 Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

4 "Eastern Philosophy—Confucius," YouTube video, posted by "The School of Life," February 6, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUhGRh4vdb8&t=75s>; Bryan W. Van Norden, "Who Was Confucius?" YouTube video, posted by "Ted-ed," October 27, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFt\\_VGG0kJU&t=5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFt_VGG0kJU&t=5s).

5 Bin Song (blog), HuffPost, <https://www.huffpost.com/author/binsong1981-695>.

6 Benjamin L. Butina, *Stone Chimes—The Analects of Confucius*, accessed February 10, 2019, <http://stonechimes.com/>.

7 Friends from Afar: A Confucianism Group's Facebook page, accessed February 10, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/confucian.friends/>.

8 Pew Research Center, "Religious Landscape Study," accessed February 10, 2019, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>.

purposes of this study, it is important to note that MTurk samples somewhat over-represent atheist and agnostic viewpoints when compared to the U.S. adult population as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

The survey consists of 23 items, available in Appendix A. The 11 demographic items were reproduced exactly from the Pew Religious Landscape Study (2018) to enable future comparisons between findings. The 12 items focused on knowledge and attitudes related to Ruism were modeled closely on similar items presented in the Pew Religious Landscape Study (2018), with the exception of items 20 and 23, which deal with Ruism-specific terms and motivation to learn more about Ruism, respectively.

## Results <sup>[76]</sup>

Selected results are summarized in the figures below. The complete report of univariate results can be found in Appendix B.

### Sample Demographics <sup>[77]</sup>

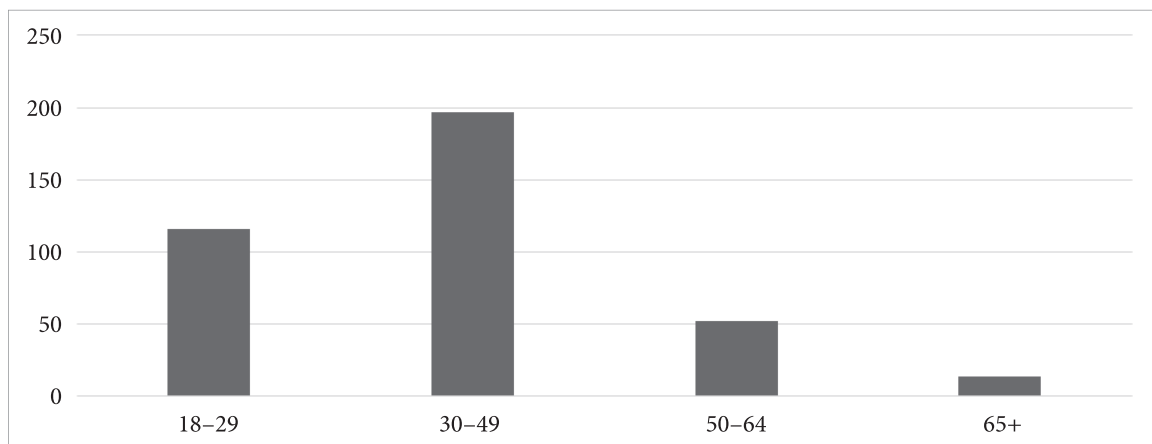


FIGURE 1. Age

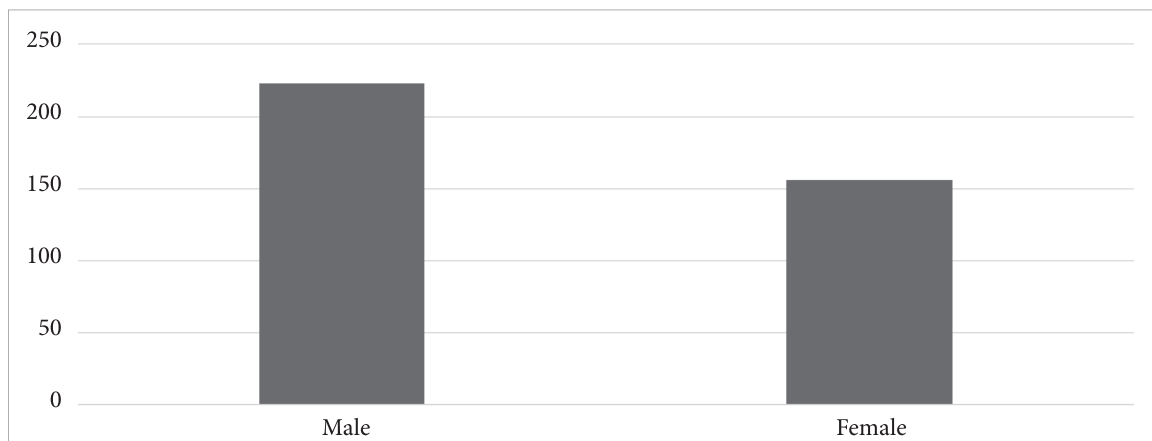


FIGURE 2. Gender

<sup>9</sup> Martin J. Burnham, Yen K. Le, and Ralph L. Piedmont, "Who is MTurk? Personal Characteristics and Sample Consistency of These Online Workers," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 21, no. 9-10 (2018): 934-944.

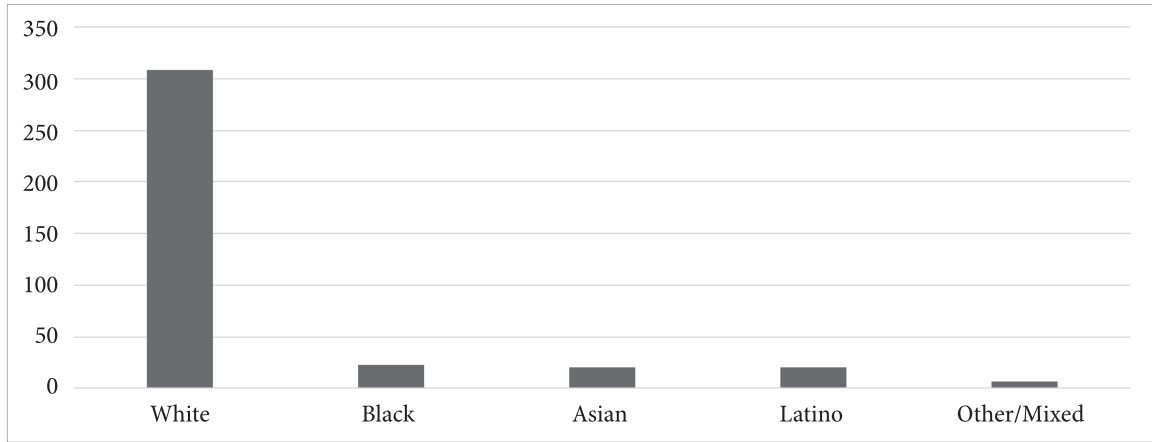


FIGURE 3. Race/Ethnicity

For information on other sample demographics (i.e., marital status, education, household income, area type, political ideology, political party, beliefs about God, and religious affiliation), including percentages for the above, see Appendix B.

**Familiarity with Confucianism and Related Concepts [78]**

Most respondents claim low-to-moderate familiarity with Confucianism, with about 15% describing themselves as not at all familiar and about 6% describing themselves as very familiar with the tradition.

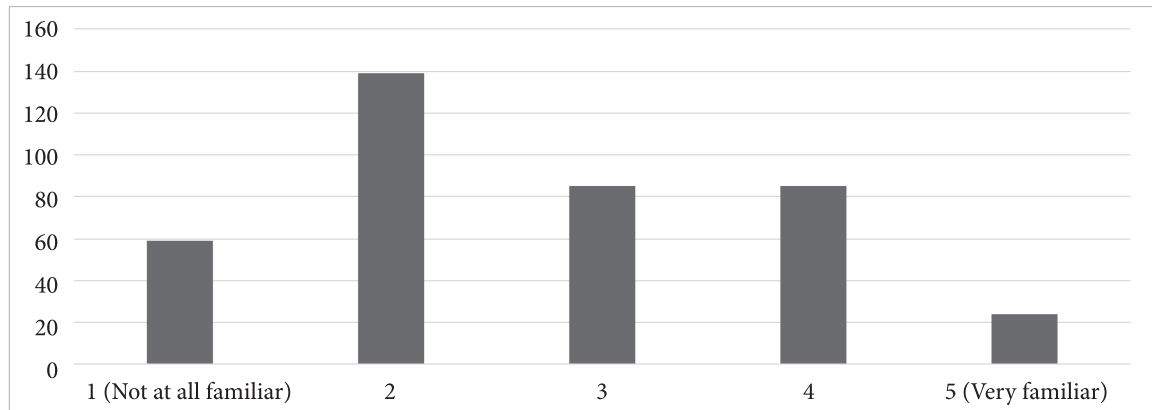


FIGURE 4. Familiarity with Confucianism

About 49% of the respondents claim to be not at all familiar with Neo-Confucianism, and only 6% claiming to be very familiar with it.

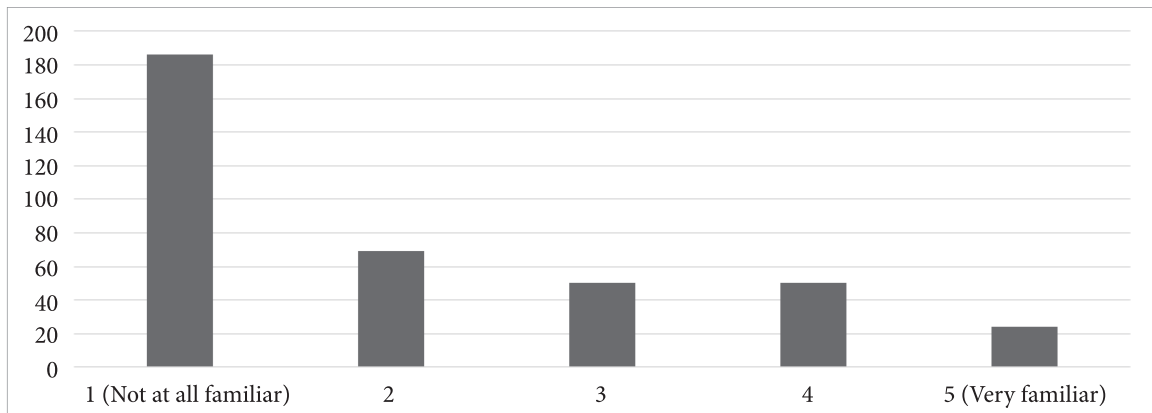


FIGURE 5. Familiarity with Neo-Confucianism

About 60% of those surveyed claimed to be not at all familiar with Ruism. About 6% claimed to be very familiar with it.

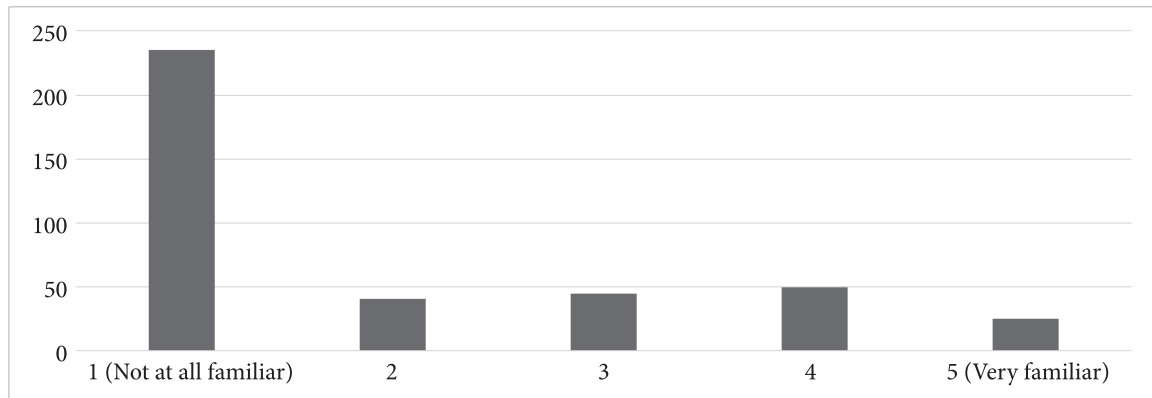


FIGURE 6. Familiarity with Ruism

About 42% of the respondents categorized Confucianism as a philosophy. About 27% considered it to be a combination of a religion and a philosophy. Relatively few respondents categorized Confucianism as a religion (13%) or a form of spirituality (7%) and about 11% were not sure how to categorize it.

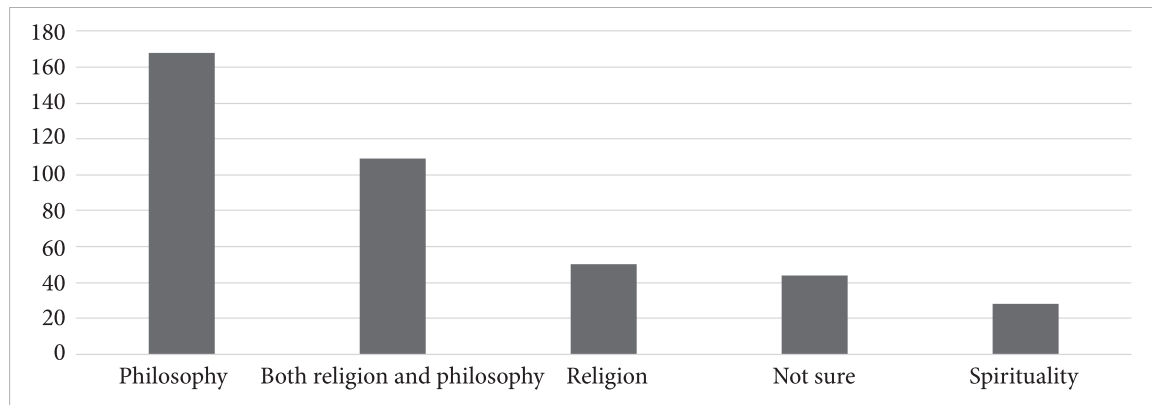


FIGURE 7. Categorization of Confucianism

The most common terms and concepts associated with Confucianism by the respondents were *ancient* (60%), *ethics* (50%), *spirituality* (37%), *honor* (37%), and *tradition* (32%). Of the terms provided, those least commonly associated with Confucianism by the respondents were *sexist* (4%), *innovation* (3%), *laziness* (3%), *spontaneity* (2%), and *dishonesty* (2%).

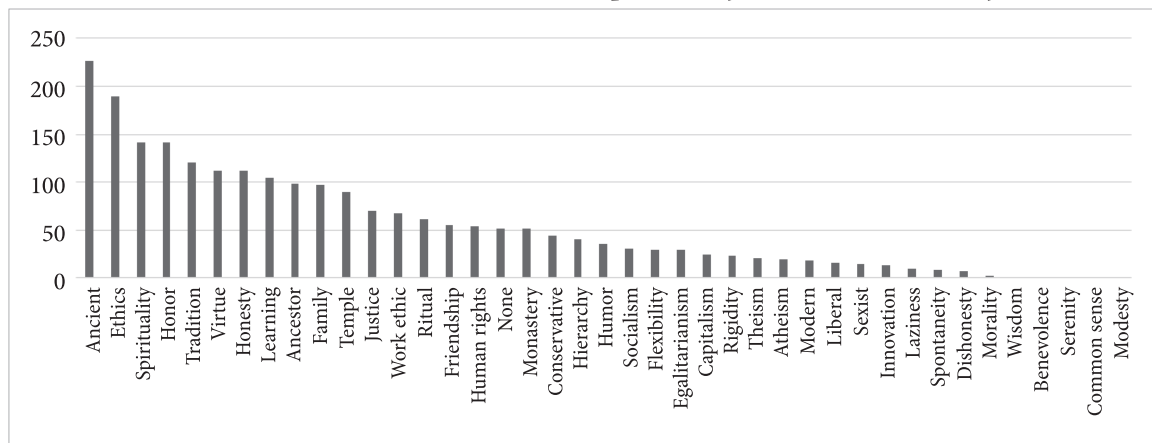


FIGURE 8. Terms and Concepts Associated with Confucianism

**Recollection of Prior Learning about Confucianism** [80]

Most respondents cannot recall learning anything at all about Confucianism in primary school (41%). About 7% recollect learning quite a lot.

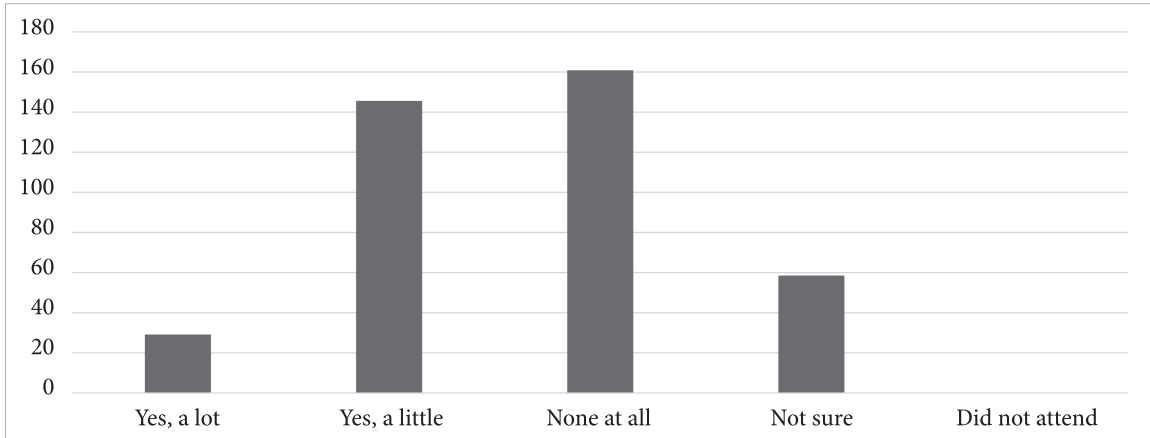


FIGURE 9. Recall Learning about Confucianism in Primary School

Many respondents (47%) remember learning a little about Confucianism in high school; a substantial proportion (34%), however, cannot recollect learning anything about the topic in high school.

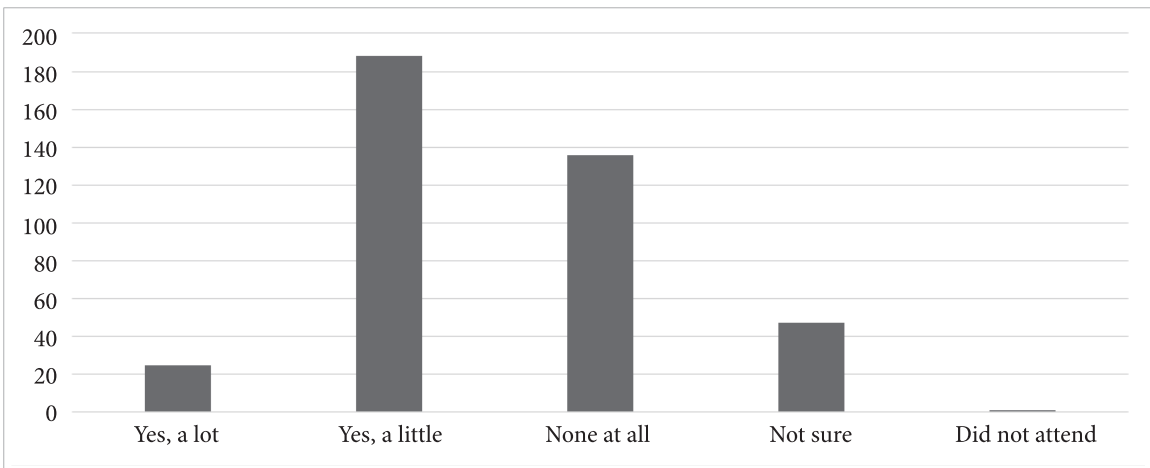


FIGURE 10. Recall Learning about Confucianism in High School

About 42% of the respondents recall learning nothing at all about Confucianism in college. A substantial proportion (36%) remember learning a little.

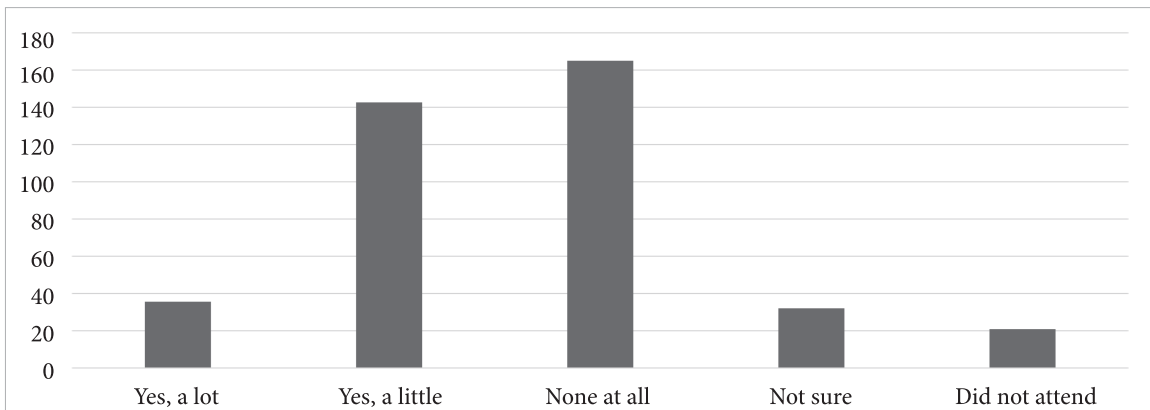


FIGURE 11. Recall Learning about Confucianism in College

**Attitudes toward Confucianism** [81]

Most respondents (54%) reported a neutral attitude toward Confucianism. Relatively few (4%) expressed an unfavorable opinion toward the tradition. About 9% were not sure of their attitude.

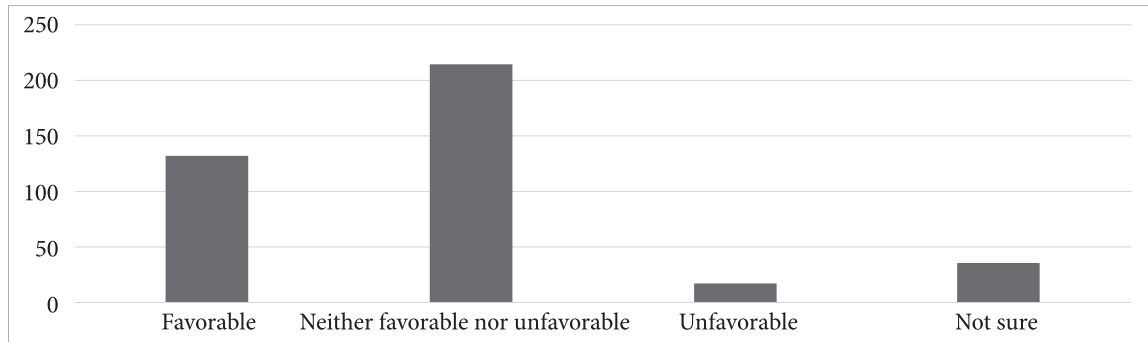


FIGURE 12. Overall Impression of Confucianism

Many respondents (41%) neither agreed nor disagreed that Confucianism is relevant to twenty-first century Americans. About 44% agreed or strongly agreed that Confucianism is relevant and about 15% disagree or strongly disagreed with the statement.

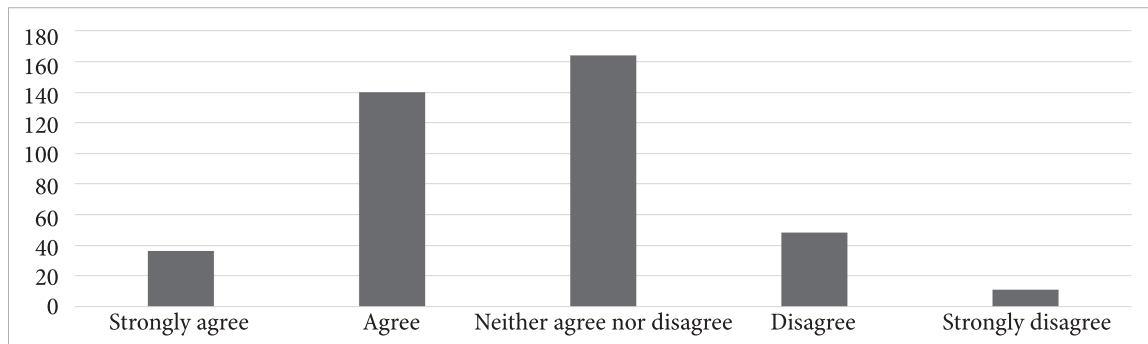


FIGURE 13. Level of Agreement with the Statement, “Confucianism Is Relevant to 21st Century Americans”

Consistent with the previous question, many respondents (41%) neither agreed nor disagreed that Confucianism is a valid worldview for twenty-first century Americans. Notably, about 44% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. About 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed with it.

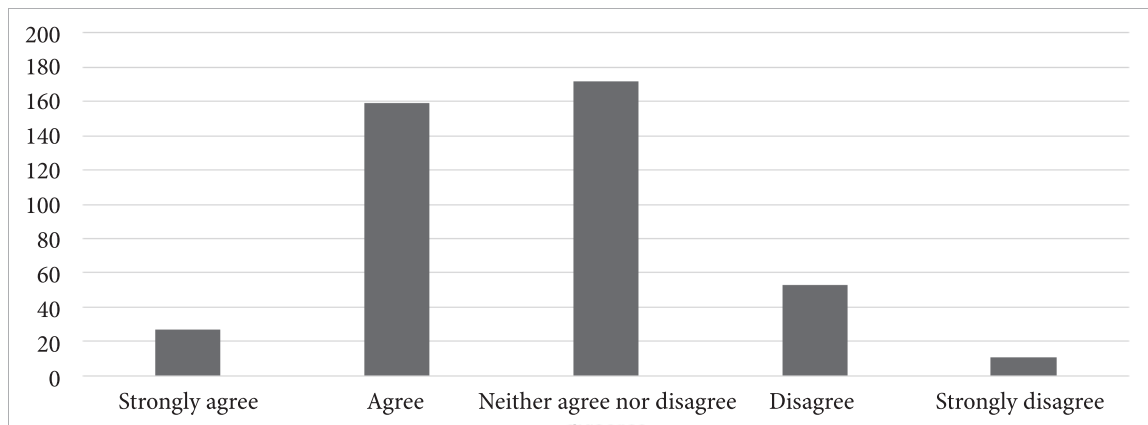


FIGURE 14. Level of Agreement with the Statement, “Confucianism Is a Valid Worldview for 21st Century Americans”

A substantial proportion of the respondents were either somewhat (4, 36%) or very interested (5, 23%) in learning more about Confucianism.

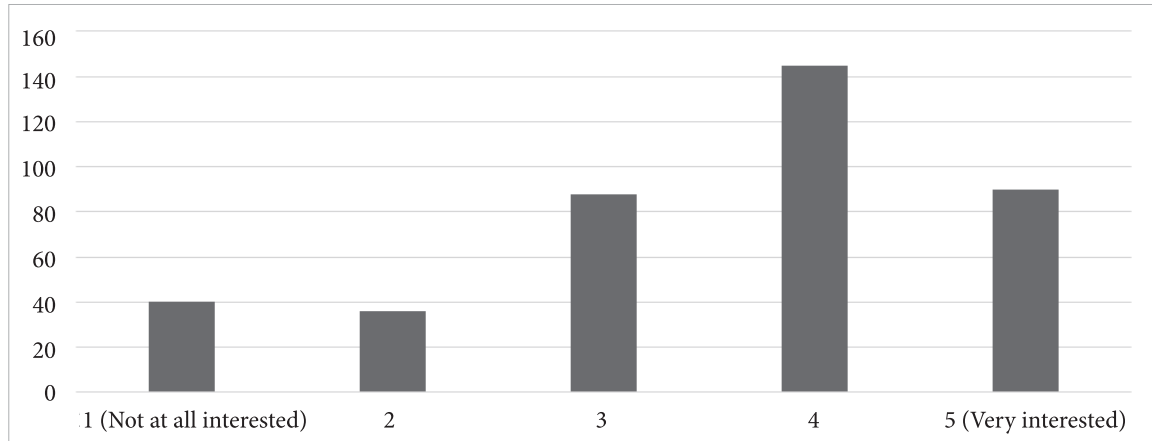


FIGURE 15. Interest Level in Learning More about Confucianism

Frequency tables, including percentages, for each of the survey items is available in Appendix B.

## Discussion <sup>[83]</sup>

Insofar as this sample reasonably approximates the U.S. population, we may sketch the following persona to summarize the averaged results: The average American believes she is somewhat familiar with Confucianism but is unfamiliar with Neo-Confucianism or the term *Ruism*. She remembers learning a little about Confucianism in high school but little or nothing about it in primary school or college. She considers Confucianism to be a philosophy rather than a religion, but believes it has religious or spiritual dimensions. She perceives Confucianism to be ancient, and to address issues of ethics, spirituality, virtue, and honor. She is neutral about Confucianism’s relevance to twenty-first century Americans but she is willing to learn more about it.

Popularizers of the tradition may be encouraged to find that most respondents were at least somewhat open to learning more about Ruism. Further, their knowledge about the tradition, though limited, appears to be reasonably accurate. In addition, a substantial proportion of the respondents are open to the notion that Confucianism may be a valid worldview for twenty-first century Americans. Ruist scholars will be unsurprised to learn that most respondents recall learning little-to-nothing about Ruism during their formal education, but that many have an interest in learning more.

### Limitations <sup>[83]</sup>

As discussed above, the representativeness of MTurk samples is controversial. As Burnham and colleagues stated, MTurk respondents are somewhat more likely to profess atheism or agnosticism than the U.S. population as a whole.<sup>10</sup> Although the relationship between theism and attitudes toward Confucianism were not explored in this study, it is reasonable to wonder if a more representative sample may show somewhat more negative and less receptive attitudes toward Confucianism than the sample chosen for this study.

<sup>10</sup> Burnham, Le, and Piedmont, “Who is MTurk? Personal Characteristics and Sample Consistency of These Online Workers,” 934–944.

**Recommendations for Further Research** [83]

As discussed in the Introduction, the purpose of this study is descriptive. Theory-driven research on the current dataset is recommended, however. Specifically, there may be potential to examine the relationships between various demographic dimensions and knowledge and attitudes toward Confucianism. Comparison between these findings and those of the Pew Religious Landscape Study (2018) may also be fruitful. The survey should also be re-administered at regular intervals to assess societal changes in knowledge and attitudes toward Confucianism. Follow-up surveys should be conducted with more representative samples.

**What Should We Do Next as Ru Theorists?** [83]

We believe this survey and its discussed results are of utmost significance for Ruist theorists to reflect upon what to do next in order to increase the public awareness of Ruism in the U.S.. However, before having this theoretical reflection, we need to address the issue of popularization of Ruism that is briefly mentioned at the beginning of the paper.

Compared to other major ancient Chinese traditions, Ruism is notoriously hard to popularize. It does not have a text as neatly written as the Daoist *Daodejing*, whose wild mysticism can attract almost any English reader at any level. Unlike Buddhism, it lacks an independent monastery system to intensively inculcate its teaching in a secured religious space. As the most proactive aspect of ancient Chinese civilization, Ruism's primary focus is to furnish an ethical common ground for all people to live together. The central concern of Ruism, therefore, is to construct, rather than deconstruct, civilizational conventions, facilities, and institutions to achieve harmony in varying and evolving situations. This constructive spirit of Ruism does not surely preclude a critical and deconstructive spirit regarding inhumane aspects of human civilization, although this latter spirit is not prioritized over the former either. Understood as such, to accurately understand Ruism requires us to comprehend both the principles of the philosophical system itself and the historical and societal minutiae of a given civilization that those principles are meant to operate upon. Furthermore, if we wish to uproot Ruism from its original cultural soil and transplant it to another, we must make a tremendous effort to learn the historical and societal details of this new target civilization as well. Our aim of transplantation will therefore be to perfect, and thus, to increase, the harmony of this new civilization under the guidance of Ruist principles, which were once exemplified elsewhere. This also means that the popularization of Ruism in today's America is essentially a process of inspiration, perfection, and progression, rather than as a utopian disruptor of the established order. We understand this essential nature of "springing up within a continuum," so-to-speak, of the Ruist social ideal is meant by Confucius when he says he "transmits but not invents" (*Analects*, 7:1). It is not that Confucius was not innovative. He invented during transmitting.

But who can possibly comprehend the historical and societal minutiae of both the Chinese and American civilizations? The former has more than 2,500 years of uninterrupted sophistication; the latter with its blazing multi-cultural worldly power, with roots all the way back to ancient Greek? This explains the primary difficulty of popularizing Ruism. Due to this challenge, despite all the exceptional pioneering works of popularization mentioned at the beginning of the paper, we have witnessed a phenomenon of polarization of Ruist scholarship and public discourse in both the Chinese and English-speaking world for the past several decades: The presence of Ruism in public spheres could turn out to be either



(a) popularization with distortion or (b) complex academic works that make little-or-no popular impact. Needless to say, this polarization is enhanced by the institutional inertia of both modern higher education, which tends to see any popularizing work outside the academia with suspicion, and of mass society, which tends to consider academic works, particularly in the area of humanities, as bookish and non-pragmatic.

Nevertheless, given the great examples of popularization in the history of Ruism, the prospect *should not* be this gloomy. Consider Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) *A Collected Annotation of the Four Books* [四书章句集注] and *Reflections on Things at Hand* [近思录] (the latter of which is co-authored with Lü Zuqian), two of the most impactful Ru readings in Ruism's medieval and early modern periods, as primary examples for the popularization. After considering the intimidating complexity and profundity of the corpus of Ruist classics, Zhu Xi selected two short chapters from the *Book of Rites* and two books comprised of sayings and deeds by the two most prominent ancient Ruist sages, Confucius and Mencius, and compiled them into a new Ruist canon, the so-called Four Books. Zhu Xi included his own detailed and updated annotations for this work, which even included the guidance of pronunciations for difficult characters! Zhu Xi did not only think of this condensed canon system as the initial entryway to those more complicated Ruist classics, he also organized the order of the Four Books such that each of them was, in turn, presented as the entryway to its subsequent text. Similarly, *Reflections on Things at Hand* contained selected sayings and writings by four prominent contemporary Ruist scholar-officials and arranged them in varying categories with Zhu Xi's own annotations. Zhu Xi hoped that these eminent Ru contemporaries could be read as nearby examples for Ru beginners, so that through pondering those sayings and deeds, the beginners of his day could find an entryway to those ancient teachings. Let us temporarily put aside all those social factors making the success of Zhu Xi's scholarship, such as print technology, the prosperity of the urban economy, and the multi-/inter- national political environments. Instead, what is impressive about the unique feature of Zhu Xi's scholarship *per se* is this: all those compiled readings were authored by a genuine Ru master who had a systematic comprehension of ancient Ru classics, but they also have a unique range of readership to target: they were written for immature beginners who had interest in, but remained ignorant of Ruism. This is surely a successful example of the popularization of Ruism.

Zhu Xi's popularization of Ru teachings set a standard for us to consider as we ponder our similar situation in today's America. As emblemized by Zhu Xi's work, we expect that a genuinely successful popularizing endeavor of American Ruism should be to overcome the aforementioned polarization: the desired popularization must be anchored in the soundest and most comprehensive academic understanding of Ruist philosophy and history, while simultaneously having a deep sympathy for the living conditions of a contemporary American audience. After all, what else can we expect from the tradition of Ruism which always takes harmony or "harmonization" in all levels of society as its ultimate ideal? It is indeed a high bar for us, but we have no doubt that the ideal is worth pursuing. Now that we have reflected upon the theme of popularization, let's turn to the former set of data and its discussion.

It is encouraging for Ru theorists to see that, according to the data, an average American person today faces exactly the same situation as what Zhu Xi once grappled with: she shows interest in, but remains ignorant of, Ruism. It is also equally encouraging to know that a significant proportion (44%) of the respondents are open to the notion that "Confucianism may be a valid worldview for 21st century Americans," even though this optimism may stand upon a loose foundation of limited knowledge.

The reason why an average American person shows interest and in a tenuous stance, holds an optimistic vision toward the future of Ruism in America, can be reasonably inferred from the data. Consider the terms and concepts associated with Ruism in Figure 8, among which the top ten are: ancient, ethics, spirituality, honor, tradition, virtue, honesty, learning, ancestor, family. Which country does *not* want to incorporate these characteristics into its *Zeitgeist*? Inspired by this Figure, Ru theorists should also feel a great release when negative terms such as rigidity, sexist, or even hierarchy, turn out in lower positions. During the past decades, one of major efforts by some of Ru theorists was to correct people's misunderstanding, or even distortion of Ruism, which we think was mainly caused by the influence of the racially anti-Ruist discourse created and perpetuated in early modern China, such as during the so-called May Fourth Movement and New Culture Movement (1919). However, according to the aforementioned empirical research, the average American person remains largely ignorant of Ruism, and do not associate those negative terms with Ruism. This is a great advantage for Ru theorists when shifting their audience from Asians to average Americans: because Ruism is less known, the biased and unjust charges made by previous generations of radicalized Asian intellectuals against Ruism hold less weight. This creates a greater opportunity for Ru theorists to present the best of Ruism concerning an utterly new situation, and thus, we can also reasonably hope for and work toward a new Ruism-inspired era of harmonization in American society.

Another encouraging message we can infer from Figure 8 is that terms such as *theism* and *atheism* are associated with Ruism much less frequently than spirituality. This may be related to another result in which most of the respondents categorized Ruism more as a philosophy than a religion, or that they classify it as some combination of philosophy and religion. We interpret these results to mean that most Americans do not find it easy to pigeonhole Ruism into their established conception of religion; at the same time, they understand Ruism as potentially an integrative worldview that is able to furnish meaning and guidance to major aspects of human life, and hence, has a rich religious or spiritual dimension. Inspired by this discussion, we believe that one major benefit of systematically incorporating Ruist thought into the American academy is that we must correspondingly modify our preconceived idea of either *philosophy* or *religion*. As a result, innovative new ideas may be generated. If we do this in the realm of *philosophy*, our understanding of philosophy needs to be more oriented toward a more holistic way of life rather than merely a rational form of argumentative thinking. If we do this in the realm of *religious studies*, then the image of *religion* should be more detached from textual or personal revelation, deity worship, class of priests or clergy, and secluded religious institutions. As a result, the image should be more aligned with individual and communal spirituality, efficacy in everyday human activities, and scholarly critical thinking.

So, what should we do next?

Given the unique feature of Ru spirituality as it is shown by both the history, the philosophy, and the current public understanding of Ruism, we think it is not fitting to conceive of it mainly as a religion, and thus, revive it as one of juxtaposed "world religions" that need to flourish their institutional life upon the underlying American social and political infrastructure. For Ruism to benefit America, Ru theorists should focus primarily upon institutions of public education, and their related familial, communal, and workplace environment. Overall, these institutions can be termed as secular in contrast with typical separated religious institutions; but when we do this, we also need to remember that the ambiguity of the contrast between *religious* and *secular* registers prominently in Ruism's case. As inspired by the data, we would like to project that the most viable and impending task for Ru theorists is to develop a systematic series of curricula designed for varying stages

of public education: elementary, junior and high schools, and colleges. Given the fact that Ru scholars are now mostly flourishing in academic life in colleges and universities, the task can be concretized as developing curricula that are fit for college teaching. As inspired by the findings in this study, we should make efforts to ensure that both classical Ruism and Ruism in its different epochal and geographical manifestations (including the so-called Neo-Confucianism) are covered in these curricula. Moreover, the difference between the term *Confucianism* and *Ruism*—and the related issue of how the Ru tradition historically interacted with the Western world—should also be taken into serious consideration when designing the curricula.

Nevertheless, no matter how quantitatively we envision the enterprise of popularizing Ruism in the U.S. as such, we need to keep the ideal of being a Ru as a constant qualifier for all those endeavors. To be a Ru is to be a generally educated and civilized human person in order to make use of all relevant achievements of human civilization to realize harmonies in varying and evolving situations. In this way, whether Ruism can be successfully populated by average Americans will be determined upon whether more and more Ruists, whose knowledge and skills are inspired by Ruism and all other relevant civilizational achievements, can become educated enough to act as social activists in varying realms of American society.

#### APPENDIX A: Survey Items [86]

1. What is your age? (18–29, 30–49, 50–64, 65+)
2. What is your gender? (Male, Female)
3. What is your race/ethnicity? (White, Black, Asian, Latino, Other/Mixed)
4. What is your current marital status? (Married, Living with a partner, Divorced or separated, Widowed, Never married)
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (High school or less, Some college, College, Graduate or professional degree)
6. What is the income level of your household? (Less than \$30,000, \$30,000–\$49,999, \$50,000–\$99,999, \$100,000 or more)
7. Which of the following best describes the area you live in? (Urban, Suburban, Small town, Rural)
8. Which of the following best describes your political ideology? (Conservative, Moderate, Liberal, Don't know)
9. Which political party do you most identify with? (Republican/Lean republican, No lean, Democrat/Lean democrat)
10. Which of the following statements best describes your beliefs about God? (I am absolutely certain that God exists, I am fairly certain that God exists, I am not too certain/not at all certain that God exists, I don't know how certain I am that God exists, I do not believe in God, Other/I don't know if I believe in God)
11. Which of the following best describes your religious affiliation? (Christian: Evangelical Protestant, Christian: Mainline Protestant, Christian: Historically Black Protestant, Christian: Catholic, Christian: Mormon, Christian: Orthodox Christian, Christian: Jehovah's Witness, Christian: Other, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Unaffiliated [None], Other)
12. On a scale of 1 to 5, how familiar are you with Confucianism? (1 [Not at all familiar], 2, 3, 4, 5 [Very familiar])
13. On a scale of 1 to 5, how familiar are you with Neo-Confucianism? (1 [Not at all familiar], 2, 3, 4, 5 [Very familiar])
14. On a scale of 1 to 5, how familiar are you with Ruism? (1 [Not at all familiar], 2, 3, 4, 5 [Very familiar])

15. Do you remember learning anything about Confucianism in primary school/grade school? (Yes a lot, Yes a little, None at all, Not sure, I did not attend primary school/grade school)
16. Do you remember learning anything about Confucianism in high school? (Yes a lot, Yes a little, None at all, Not sure, I did not attend high school)
17. Do you remember learning anything about Confucianism in college? (Yes a lot, Yes a little, None at all, Not sure, I did not attend college)
18. What is your attitude toward Confucianism? (Favorable, Neither favorable nor unfavorable, Unfavorable)
19. Based only on your current knowledge, how would you characterize Confucianism? (As a religion, As a philosophy, As both a religion and a philosophy, A form of spirituality, Not sure, Other)
20. Which of the following terms or concepts do you associate with Confucianism? (Ancient, Ancestor, Atheism, Capitalism, Dishonesty, Conservative, Egalitarianism, Ethics, Family, Flexibility, Friendship, Hierarchy, Honor, Human rights, Honesty, Humor, Innovation, Justice, Laziness, Learning, Liberal, Modern, Monastery, Rigidity, Ritual, Sexist, Spirituality, Spontaneity, Socialism, Temple, Theism, Tradition, Virtue, Work ethic, None)
21. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Confucianism is relevant to 21st century Americans. (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)
22. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Confucianism is a valid worldview for 21st century Americans. (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)
23. How interested would you be to learn more about Confucianism? (1 [Not at all interested], 2, 3, 4, 5 [Very interested])

APPENDIX B: Univariate Results [87]

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics for Age

	<i>n</i>	%
18–29	116	30.6
30–49	197	52
50–64	52	13.7
65+	14	3.7

TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics for Gender

	<i>n</i>	%
Male	223	58.8
Female	156	41.2

TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics for Race/Ethnicity

	<i>n</i>	%
White	309	81.5
Black	23	6.1
Asian	20	5.3
Latino	20	5.3
Other/Mixed	7	1.8

TABLE 4. Descriptive Statistics for Marital Status

	<i>n</i>	%
Married	203	53.4
Living with a partner	29	7.6

Divorced or separated	28	7.4
Widowed	5	1.3
Never married	115	30.4

TABLE 5. Descriptive Statistics for Education

	<i>n</i>	%
High school or less	25	6.6
Some college (no degree)	99	26
College	166	43.6
Graduate or professional degree	91	23.9

TABLE 6. Descriptive Statistics for Household Income

	<i>n</i>	%
Less than \$30,000	79	20.7
\$30,000–\$49,999	108	28.3
\$50,000–\$99,999	143	37.5
\$100,000+	51	13.4

TABLE 7. Descriptive Statistics for Area of Residence

	<i>n</i>	%
Urban	140	36.5
Suburban	158	41.4
Small town	39	10.2
Rural	46	12

TABLE 8. Descriptive Statistics for Political Ideology

	<i>n</i>	%
Conservative	101	26.2
Moderate	93	24.2
Liberal	184	47.8
Don't know	7	1.8

TABLE 9. Descriptive Statistics for Political Party

	<i>n</i>	%
Republican/Lean republican	138	35.8
No lean	49	12.7
Democrat/Lean democrat	198	51.4

TABLE 10. Descriptive Statistics for Beliefs about God

	<i>n</i>	%
Absolute certain of God's existence	149	38.6
Fairly certain of God's existence	82	21.2
Not too certain/Not at all certain	35	9.1
Don't know how certain	32	8.3
Does not believe	64	16.6
Other/Don't know	24	6.2

TABLE 11. Descriptive Statistics for Religious Affiliation

	<i>n</i>	%
Christian: Evangelical Protestant	41	10.6
Christian: Mainline Protestant	39	10.1
Christian: Historically Black Protestant	4	1
Christian: Catholic	108	27.8
Christian: Mormon	2	1.2

Christian: Orthodox Christian	4	1
Christian: Jehovah's Witness	0	0
Christian: Other	26	6.7
Jewish	7	0.2
Muslim	5	1.3
Buddhist	9	1.9
Hindu	6	1.5
Unaffiliated (None)	120	30.9
Other	19	0.05

TABLE 12. Descriptive Statistics for Familiarity with Confucianism

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (Not at all familiar)	59	15.1
2	139	35.5
3	85	21.7
4	85	21.7
5 (Very familiar)	24	6.3

TABLE 13. Descriptive Statistics for Familiarity with Neo-Confucianism

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (Not at all familiar)	186	49.1
2	69	18.2
3	50	13.2
4	50	13.2
5 (Very familiar)	24	6.3

TABLE 14. Descriptive Statistics for Familiarity with Ruism

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (Not at all familiar)	235	59.5
2	41	10.4
3	45	11.4
4	50	12.6
5 (Very familiar)	25	6.3

TABLE 15. Descriptive Statistics for Memory of Learning about Confucianism in Primary School

	<i>n</i>	%
Yes, a lot	29	7.3
Yes, a little	146	30.1
None at all	161	40.8
Not sure	59	14.9
Did not attend	0	0

TABLE 16. Descriptive Statistics for Memory of Learning about Confucianism in High School

	<i>n</i>	%
Yes, a lot	25	6.3
Yes, a little	188	47.4
None at all	136	34.3
Not sure	47	11.8
Did not attend	1	0.3

TABLE 17. Descriptive Statistics for Memory of Learning about Confucianism in College

	<i>n</i>	%
Yes, a lot	36	9.1
Yes, a little	143	36
None at all	165	41.6

Not sure	32	8.1
Did not attend	21	5.3

TABLE 18. Descriptive Statistics for Attitude toward Confucianism

	<i>n</i>	%
Favorable	132	33.1
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	215	53.9
Unfavorable	17	4.3
Not sure	35	8.8

TABLE 19. Descriptive Statistics for Categorization of Confucianism

	<i>n</i>	%
Religion	50	12.5
Philosophy	168	42.1
Both religion and philosophy	109	27.3
Spirituality	28	7
Not sure	44	11

TABLE 20. Descriptive Statistics for Terms/Concepts Associated with Confucianism

	<i>n</i>	%
Ancient	227	59.9
Ethics	190	50.1
Spirituality	141	37.2
Honor	141	37.2
Tradition	120	31.7
Virtue	112	29.6
Honesty	112	29.6
Learning	104	27.4
Ancestor	98	25.9
Family	97	25.6
Temple	90	23.7
Justice	70	18.5
Work ethic	67	17.7
Ritual	61	16.1
Friendship	55	14.5
Human rights	54	14.2
Monastery	51	13.5
Conservative	44	11.6
Hierarchy	40	10.6
Humor	36	9.5
Socialism	31	8.2
Flexibility	29	7.7
Egalitarianism	29	7.7
Capitalism	25	6.6
Rigidity	23	6.1
Theism	21	5.5
Atheism	20	5.3
Modern	18	4.7
Liberal	16	4.2
Sexist	15	4.0
Innovation	13	3.4
Laziness	10	2.6
Spontaneity	9	2.4
Dishonesty	7	1.8
None	48	12.6
Other (respondent supplied)		
Wisdom	1	0.2
Benevolence	1	0.2
Serenity	1	0.2
Common sense	1	0.2
Modesty	1	0.2

TABLE 21. Descriptive Statistics for Confucianism's Relevance to 21st Century Americans

	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly agree	36	9
Agree	140	35.1
Neither agree nor disagree	164	41.1
Disagree	48	12
Strongly disagree	11	2.8

TABLE 22. Descriptive Statistics for Confucianism's Validity as a Worldview for 21st Century Americans

	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly agree	27	6.4
Agree	159	37.7
Neither agree nor disagree	172	40.8
Disagree	53	12.6
Strongly disagree	11	2.6

TABLE 23. Descriptive Statistics for Interest in Learning about Confucianism

	<i>n</i>	%
1 (Not at all interested)	40	10
2	36	9
3	88	22.1
4	145	36.3
5 (Very interested)	90	22.6