

The Crisis of Global COVID-19 Governance and the Challenge of Liberalism From Error-Tolerantism

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The crisis of COVID-19 governance in Western countries has demonstrated inherent defects of the concept of freedom defined by liberalists. Error-Tolerantism integrating liberalism with China's cultures divides the right to freedom into two categories: The right to freedom in the innovative fields is the right to be wrong as an original right; and those to freedom in the non-innovative fields are the subordinate rights. Rights come from mutual empowerment between people. The right theory of Error-Tolerantism called error-tolerant rights paradigm is the right to be wrong as an original right and mutual empowerment theory. The first defect of liberalism is that the Western media criticized China's right to be wrong as an original right in the governance of COVID-19 by turning to the rights to freedom at the subordinate level in the context of non-COVID-19. The second defect is its failure to realize that the rational implementation of the right to be wrong as an original right will produce new subordinate rights. The number of people infected with COVID-19 in Wuhan dropping to zero indicates that new subordinate rights to freedom, such as keeping social distance, wearing face masks in public places, showing health codes, etc., have been formed and confirmed. Error-Tolerantism holds that the definition of freedom by liberalists lacks dynamics, leading to the confusion in understanding the idea of freedom and various illegal actions endangering public security, such as traveling, gathering, or demonstrating without wearing masks during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, governance, liberalism, Error-Tolerantism

Introduction

In early 2020, a new-type coronavirus of unknown origin attacked Wuhan city. The outbreak of the epidemic coincided with Chinese Spring Festival, a traditional Chinese holiday, and Wuhan, as a national transportation hub with a huge flow of travelers, was faced with a serious challenge of effectively curbing the spread of the virus. On January 23, 2020, Wuhan established the prevention and control headquarters of the new coronavirus infection, which issued a circular, "The city buses, subways, ferries, long-distance buses are suspended. Without due reasons, citizens are not allowed to leave Wuhan, and at the same time, all channels such as airports and railway etc. are temporarily closed" (Department of the CPC Wuhan Municipal Committee,

Acknowledgement: We really appreciate our colleague Associate Professor Yaxiong Zhu who helps us revise the grammatical problems in the article.

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2020). Finally, Wuhan city officially entered a state of complete lockdown. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), praised that Wuhan's measures to close public transportation to prevent the spread of pneumonia caused by the new-type coronavirus were extremely powerful (Nebehay, 2020). But Western critics claimed that it was a violation of human rights to segregate residents at home and restrict their freedom. However, on April 8, 2020, Wuhan, after 76 days' lockdown, successfully and completely controlled the COVID-19 epidemic and effectively protected the public safety of the whole society (People.cn, 2020). It is also a proof that China has achieved phased success in fighting the COVID-19 epidemic, and defined the new connotation of freedom with "Chinese characteristics and universality": keeping social distance, wearing face masks in public places, showing health codes, etc.

In the process of governing the COVID-19, the great differences in understanding human rights between China and the United States have been highlighted. In China, the legitimacy of human rights depends on whether measures can help to control the COVID-19 spread or not, and ensuring the safety of people's lives is the first priority. However, the Western countries set the connotation of human rights first, and then analyze how to control the COVID-19 situation, which reflects a procedure that theory precedes practice. Most Western scholars (Markel, 2020; Eve, 2020; Saplakoglu, 2020) and media believed that the closure of a city would lead to the violations of human rights (Levenson, 2020). Moreover, it is considered unconstitutional in the United States, and there exists a balance between protecting people's lives and their livelihoods correspondingly (Gunia, 2020). Critics regarded that restricting the lives of residents in ways that endangered human rights might cause various problems, such as a lack of medical supplies, and eventually the blockade of Wuhan city would turn into a humanitarian disaster (Qin, Myers, & Yu, 2020). On March 8, 2020, a dramatic side appeared in New York Times: It criticized China's COVID-19 governance at the cost of people's livelihoods and personal liberties, but after a short period of 20 minutes, it commented that Italy's lockdown measures were to protect Europe, taking risks of economic slowdown to curb the spread of the COVID-19 there (Qin, 2020; Horowitz, 2020). Chinese and some foreign media have criticized it for adopting double standards for the closure of Wuhan and Italy (XinhuaNET, 2020).

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 all over the world, Western countries, which criticized China's lockdown of Wuhan city as a violation of human rights, have successively adopted various measures to close their cities. However, foreign scholars have not stopped their criticism from the perspective of liberalism (Rauhala, Wan, & Shih, 2020; Emma & Lily, 2020). On Mar. 11, 2020, Lawrence Gostin, professor of global health law at Georgetown University, said that there should be a balance between health and civil liberties, and the lockdown could not realize it (Rauhala et al., 2020). He also proposed that it be necessary for countries to remain suspicious of the blockade policy, and emphasized to the media that China had a very special political system that could make her citizens comply with strict measures, but that did not apply to other countries (BBC.News, 2020a). Ben Cowling as professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Hong Kong could accept the balance between protecting people's lives and their livelihoods rather than the shutdown which was too socially or economically extreme (Gunia, 2020). But Thomas J. Bollyky, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and director of its Global Health Program, said that China's most effective measures, such as suspending public transport, limiting public gatherings, preparing their health-care system, testing significant numbers, could be undertaken without violating human rights (Rauhala et al., 2020). By March 19, the newly confirmed cases in Hubei Province of China dropped to zero after nearly two months of

the closure of Wuhan city, but its successful experience, especially the new explanation of the concept of freedom, such as wearing masks, has been ignored by Western societies.

Human Rights Watch has totally not spared a glance for the remarkable achievements of Wuhan's lockdown and published a report entitled "Human Rights Dimensions of COVID-19 Response" on March 19, which has analyzed government obligations and issues of human rights, and made a number of recommendations on how governments should respect fundamental human rights, including the right to health, freedom of speech, non-discrimination and freedom of movement during the COVID-19 epidemic. Kenneth Roth, chief executive director of Human Rights Watch, believed that when governments upgrade the level of public health security, they should not ask individuals to give up their freedom on the ground of the threat of the COVID-19 epidemic (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

But Western countries have encountered various chaotic situations in the COVID-19 governance. There are serious differences in the understanding freedom between the president, governors, and the public. First of all, many American people rejected stay-at-home orders issued by the state government to defend their freedom. For instance, St. George resident Larry Meyers organized hundreds of Utah residents gathered to protest the state's closures of businesses and facilities due to the coronavirus in an effort to assert God-given, constitutionally-protected rights, including freedom of speech and assembly (Behrmann, 2020). The Newark Police Department's COVID-19 task force issued 90 summonses for violations of the emergency orders including stay-at-home orders (Grewal & Callahan, 2020). Police in North Carolina arrested a protester after more than 100 people gathered in downtown Raleigh to protest democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's stay-at-home order. According to the Raleigh Police Department, protesting cannot be regarded as an essential function under stay-at-home orders issued by Cooper and Wake County (Behrmann, 2020). On April 20, 2020, protesters opposed the stay-at-home order outside the Ohio Statehouse, and they emphasized "Freedom over safety". But the governor Mike DeWine thought that freedom and safety were mutually inclusive (Steer, 2020). Thousands of protesters flocked to Huntington Beach, opposing the state's stay-at-home mandate for fighting the COVID-19. Some of them said that their essential freedoms could not be changed for any reason (Emery, Schwebke, & Park, 2020). In addition, the understanding of freedom between judges and governors also conflicted. On April 15, an U.S. District Judge Justin Walker issued a temporary restraining order against Mayor Greg Fischer of Louisville, Kentucky, who had unilaterally banned drive-in Easter services. Justin Walker thought that the Mayor's decision was stunning, and was definitely unconstitutional (Sullum, 2020). The above-mentioned series of events have shown that the stay-at-home order issued by the US state government during the COVID-19 pandemic is in contradiction with traditional liberalism that the US Constitution is based on, so people can turn to the Constitution to defend their freedom, thus opposing the state government's various prohibitions restricting the freedom of life.

Secondly, the conflict between President Trump and democratic governors is closely related to their understanding of freedom. In mid-April, California, Minnesota, Virginia, Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, Utah, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and other states all had protests against stay-at-home orders (Andone, 2020). The White House provided governors with guidelines on how to reopen the states, but the President and the governors diverged on the major issue of "who can decide, when or how to reopen the American economy". Trump even called on his supporters to liberate democratic-controlled states, such as Minnesota, Virginia, and Michigan. There were various protests in those states demanding the lifting of the stay-at-home order, and

President Trump has also supported them (Behrmann, 2020). Because the connotation of freedom in the US Constitution still remains as defined during the non-coronavirus pandemic, in principle, it is not unconstitutional for him to restart American economy, and some American people also demanded and even defended their freedom with the Constitution. But democratic governors are more pragmatic in their opposition to restarting the economy before the epidemic is controlled. Thirdly, President Trump and democratic governors have different understandings of freedom, which means that there are great differences in the explanation of freedom among state governors. For example, Kristi Noem, governor of South Dakota, a Republican who accused Americans of giving up liberties for a little bit of security, so she vowed to keep her state open, and argued that it be up to individuals rather than governments to decide whether go to work, worship, or stay at home (Kenton, 2020).

Comparing the differences in the governance of the COVID-19 epidemic between China and the United States, the fundamental question lies in how to understand the core concept of freedom. From the perspective of liberalism, it sounds reasonable for foreign scholars and media to criticize Wuhan's lockdown severely. However, from a practical point of view, as of the end of August, the number of Chinese people who have died of the COVID-19 is less than 5,000 (Health Emergency Office, 2020), and the corresponding number in the United States has exceeded 180,000 (New York Times Database, 2020). Therefore, it seems that China's measures are more effective than those of the United States in protecting the people's right to life. Moreover, China has given new connotations to the concept of freedom through the COVID-19 governance: keeping social distance, wearing face masks in public places, and showing health codes. At the end of June and early July, the COVID-19 epidemic rebounded in Beijing, but was quickly controlled by Chinese government (Beijing Daily, 2020). While the United States rejected the experience of China's epidemic prevention, President Trump, governors, and American people have not reached a consensus on the understanding of freedom, which objectively contributed to the spread of the COVID-19 in the United States and further expanded the social and public crisis. On May 25, 2020, the death of George Floyd caused riots across the United States, further exacerbating the COVID-19 situation in it (Feuer & Higgins-Dunn, 2020). In July, American epidemic encountered a new round of outbreaks, and it has become a normal that the number of infected people exceeds 50,000 per day (Shumaker, 2020). President Trump wore a mask in public for the first time on July 11, 2020, claiming that wearing a mask was a great thing. However, he still rejected stay-at-home orders and was eager to restart the economy (Olorunnipa, 2020).

Why have European and American countries behaved so badly in the COVID-19 governance? The core value of liberalism, which they cherish, has not only failed to help them effectively control the epidemic, but also contributed to the spread of it. Originally based on liberalism, the criticism of Wuhan's lockdown is a violation of human rights, and it is no longer tenable in practice up to now. So, should they wait for the natural disappearance of the coronavirus pandemic or the advent of the vaccine, and then return to traditional liberalism, or should they transform and develop it to become more universal value? Liberalism has mainly undertaken the mission of criticizing and transforming China in the past four decades and she has been benefited from it greatly, but it has never planned to integrate the experience of China's rise into itself, which makes it more explanatory and inclusive possibly. Since liberalism is unwilling to undertake this historical mission, we will combine liberalism with the successful experience of China's Reform and Opening-up and develop it into a new theory of Error-Tolerantism. Then based on Error-Tolerantism, this article points out serious defects of liberalism, and explains how those can trigger an unprecedented public security crisis in the United States.

The Construction of Error-Tolerantism: Integrating Liberalism With Chinese Practices

In the history of liberalism, there are many famous thinkers, just like brilliant stars. John Locke (1672) is the founder of liberalism; then in the following three hundred years, many of them as a series of ideological giants, such as C. L. Montesquieu (1749), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1754), Thomas Paine (1791), John Mill (1806) as the representative of utilitarianism, Friedrich August Hayek (1944), and John Rawls (1971) etc., have made outstanding contributions to it significantly. Practically, it seems that the direct contribution of so many liberal masters to the COVID-19 governance is not valid, but the West does not lack theoretical resources, such as Mill's two principles of liberty: (1) The individual is not accountable to society for his action in so far as they concern the interests of no person but himself; (2) for such actions as are prejudicial to the interests of others, the individual is accountable and may be subjected either to social or legal punishment if society is of opinion that the one or the other is requisite for its protection (Mill, 1978, p. 93). In view of the COVID-19 epidemic with high contagion from person to person, it is very necessary for an individual to wear a face mask and maintain proper social distance. If he does not do so, he may endanger his health and even others' lives, which has violated Mill's principle of liberty. However, it is surprising that many people and even leaders in the West were initially resistant to wearing masks, and they were quite vigilant when they saw others do so. Judging from China's anti-epidemic experience, Wuhan's lockdown, other places' stay-at-home orders and delaying resuming operation and business bans are appropriate. However, for the United States and other Western countries, there are both those who agree with them and who resist them, so it is difficult to unify their thoughts. Why does this happen? The key lies in the fact that the foundation of the United States is liberalism, which fails to help the president, governors, and the people to unify their minds, so it cannot effectively fight against the COVID-19.

What are the defects of liberalism? In our opinion, the state of nature as the theoretical starting point of liberalism has the biggest defect, not directly integrated with the scientific method of trial and error, which makes it unable to fully understand the connotation of freedom, so that it has not only misunderstood the closure measures of Wuhan city, but damages the ability of the United States to fight against the COVID-19. China's ability to fight this pandemic effectively is closely related to the experience of China's Reform and Opening-up, but this experience is not within the scope of liberal interpretation.

China's achievements in the past 40 years of Reform and Opening-up began with Xiaoping Deng who advocated emancipating the mind and promoted reforms through "crossing the river by touching the stones", which means using the method of trial and error to explore China's modernization. On May 7, 2013, Shunde, Guangdong Province issued "The Implementation Opinions of the Shunde District Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Strengthening the Construction of Leading Groups at All Levels in Our District", which enacted a law that officials have the right to be wrong, right to freedom in the innovative fields, into which scientific method of trial and error is transformed for the first time in China (People.cn, 2020b). The idea of mistake-tolerance and correction is consistent with the understanding of the theory of knowledge by the philosopher of science Karl Popper, who put forward the development of knowledge, "...P₁—TT—EE—P₂...": TT means trial theory; EE means error elimination (Popper, 1979, p. 165). It can be seen that trial and error is of great importance to the development of natural science, and no exception to the formation of social science knowledge. However, liberal theories of John Locke, Rousseau etc., start from the state of nature expounded from the perspective of transcendentalism or "born with knowledge", which means that individuals have known

all kinds of rights and concepts before entering the human society. But according to Confucius, Chinese traditional culture emphasizes, “I was not born understanding anything. A lover of antiquity, I have diligently worked to acquire understanding” (Watson, 2007, p. 50). Therefore, the state of nature as the starting point of liberalism did not involve how knowledge and wealth are created, so it could not understand China’s trial-and-error path of Reform and Opening-up. The integration of trial and error into the state of nature—to make it close to the real society—showed that human beings are in a state of ignorance in the face of nature and social relations between people. Human ideas (including the concept of rights) are conceived by trial-and-error practices, and improved through subsequent trial-and-error practices (Zhou, 2018; 2019). Therefore, those who have mastered the qualification of trial-and-error practice have the right to be wrong (or right to trial and error), and the opportunity to create new ideas or transform existing ideas and give them new meanings. During the transition from slave to feudal society, the right to be wrong held by slave owners was transferred to the hands of feudal monarchs. The corresponding concepts such as “slaves are talking animals” were abolished, and monarchical power granted by the God provided legitimacy for the king who had the right to be wrong. From feudal to capitalist society, the monarchical right to be wrong was transferred to the bourgeoisie, and the corresponding concepts such as the divine power of the monarch were replaced by natural human rights theory and social contract theory.

The change of the whole society is that the right to be wrong is controlled by different social groups, who perform it according to their own interests to choose or create new ideas, abolish old ones, or give new ideas to old ones. In this sense, the right to be wrong has the characteristic of originality, or we can regard that the right to be wrong is an original one, just like a mother, and all the others are the subordinate one, like children: New ideas are born because of the right to be wrong, and old ideas also perishes because of it. It can be inferred that all human ideas, including the right to life, property, etc., are created or abolished by a minority or a majority of people who have the right to be wrong, whose original characteristic can also be shown through “exchanging one for many” by the “ABC model or JaJa’s model (proposed by Professor Macleans Geo-JaJa at Brigham Young University): If two persons, A and B, transfer the right be wrong to the third person C, then C should grant A and B a series of rights, such as right to supervision and criticism, right to know, and so on, so as to make up for the consequences caused by the loss of the right to be wrong (Zhou, 2018; 2019). In the state of nature, everyone is entitled to exercise the right to be wrong, which is initially not monopolized by anyone, and recognized by all. Therefore, we put forward error-tolerant rights paradigm of Error-Tolerantism: the right to be wrong as an original right and mutual empowerment theory (Zhou, 2018; 2019), in which the Western right to freedom or liberty is divided into two parts: the right to be wrong as an original right and subordinate rights in non-innovative fields. Individuals or groups have low ability to try and err in the state of nature, and it is very dangerous for them to perform the right to freedom in the field of innovation, right to be wrong as an original right. Most people would like to observe the trial-and-error practice of others and learn from them in order to protect themselves rather than perform it directly, which make liberals astonished, because they have not emphasized the danger of implementing the right to be wrong as an original right.

The process of Reform and Opening-up in China is that the right to be wrong as an original right is constantly devolved to people, and they are getting more and more rights to be wrong in various fields such as politics and economy. Therefore, the great achievements of China’s Reform and Opening-up in the past four decades are closely related to the people’s right to freedom, but liberalism cannot effectively identify this progress. On the other hand, China’s democratization process appears to be rather slow, so it is reasonable for

the West to propose that Chinese people be granted more freedom in politics, but we should not deny that we have obtained the right to freedom in the economic fields. Although the United States and other Western countries emphasize the right to freedom and their leaders constantly perform the right to be wrong on domestic and foreign issues, they have not considered the relationship between the right to be wrong and all the others' rights theoretically, nor have they fulfilled the obligation of self-criticism in public. Because of the separation between religion and politics in the history of Western countries, the spirit of repentance or confession in religion has nothing to do with liberalism and liberal democracy (Zhou, 2019). Even though the president of the United States took an oath, putting his left hand on the Bible, he did something wrong, such as hurting American people or developing countries, and never performs his obligation of self-criticism in public and has not promised to correct them. So Error-Tolerantism proposes that the defects of liberalism and liberal democracy theory be remedied.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that Error-Tolerantism, whose rights theory is the right to be wrong as an original right and mutual empowerment theory, is helpful for us to re-interpret, criticize, and reconstruct liberalism developed by John Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Mill, Green, Rawls, and Hayek etc. But the vitality of Error-Tolerantism lies in whether it has more explanatory power than liberalism, especially how to explain why it is difficult for liberal countries to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, and whether it is more helpful to quell this huge public security crisis.

The Debate on the Right of Discourse in the COVID-19 Governance Between Liberalism and Error-Tolerantism

Confronted with the unprecedented COVID-19 epidemic situation with long incubation period, high contagion and lethality, how can the government contain it in a short time? This is a major innovative field and there is little to learn from the past, and no perfect solution. Only when leaders use national resources to reasonably exercise the right to be wrong as an original right, can they protect people's subordinate rights to the greatest extent, such as the right to life, freedom, and property in non-innovative fields. On January 23, 2020, Chinese government completely blocked Wuhan city with a population of more than 10 million, which means that it performed the right to freedom in the innovative field, right to be wrong as an original right. However, the public opinion of the whole Western countries immediately exploded, accusing China's government of violating human rights in the process of containing the COVID-19, which is based on the liberalism as the foundation of the United States. However, Error-Tolerantism holds that Western public opinion criticizes the governance of China's COVID-19 epidemic by using the subordinates rights, such as the right to free migration and privacy formed under the background of non-COVID-19 epidemic situation(Wang, 2020), to criticize China's right to be wrong as an original right under the background of the COVID-19 epidemic. This is the first serious mistake made by liberalism.

Once the right to be wrong as an original right is performed, the subordinate rights to freedom will be effectively redefined as a new problem. The traditional liberalism fails to realize that the right to freedom can be divided into two parts: The right to freedom in the innovative fields is the right to be wrong as an original right; the right to freedom in the non-innovative fields is the subordinate right. Therefore, liberalism does not accept the dynamic subordinate right to freedom at a lower level: If the right to be wrong as an original right is exercised, the connotation and quantity of subordinate rights may change correspondingly. All the misunderstanding from the Western media on the lockdown of Wuhan is due to their static explanation of the

core concept of freedom, without realizing that it is only reasonable to understand the connotation of freedom from a dynamic perspective. That is the second serious mistake made by liberalists. From January 23 to March 19, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Hubei Province has gradually dropped to zero, which means that China has achieved phased success in fighting COVID-19. On April 8, Wuhan was re-opened, marking the transformation of the COVID-19 governance from innovative to non-innovative field, and has produced new subordinate rights to freedom in the pandemic period, such as keeping social distance, wearing masks in public places, and showing health codes, etc. (People.cn, 2020a).

During the coronavirus pandemic, many Americans went out, gathered or demonstrated without wearing masks, and claimed that their right to free assembly was protected by the constitution. Western leaders, such as President Trump, have been reluctant to go out with masks for a long time and rejected China's new definition of freedom when the COVID-19 epidemic spread, but they have not found a better way to control it. As a result, many Americans misunderstood freedom, and led to a surge in the number of people infected with the COVID-19, some of which paid the cost of their lives. Therefore, Error-Tolerantism holds that when Wuhan was re-opened on April 8, Western countries refused to accept China's definition of freedom at the level of subordinate rights. As a result, the United States failed to update it in time, which means to allow American people to violate the right to freedom from the angle of Error-Tolerantism. In other words, liberalism has witnessed Western criticism that the lockdown of Wuhan is a violation of human rights, but the practice has finally shown that the United States has no ability to protect people's life. The direct evidence is that the health of more than six million Americans has been damaged and more than 180,000 people have died (New York Times Database, 2020). But governors of Minnesota and Michigan have abandoned the traditional liberalism and issued stricter stay-at-home order, and then citizens of those states no longer have the right to demonstrate, gather, and move freely. According to liberalism, the closure of Wuhan city is a violation of human rights, so is their pragmatic stay-at-home order, which has also redefined freedom in the context of the COVID-19, but it has not been universally recognized by all American people. Therefore, liberalism has promoted the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in the United States objectively.

Then, can the lockdown of Wuhan that has achieved a great success be criticized? Of course it can be and should be. But Error-Tolerantism thinks that it is not right to criticize the closure of Wuhan based on liberalism. What Western scholars and media should have thought about is whether the right to freedom at the level of subordinate rights under the context of non-COVID-19 is suitable for the control of the COVID-19 epidemic. For instance, what will happen if the right to travel freely is not restricted? If it is not suitable, then it is necessary to perform the right to be wrong as an original right instead of the subordinate formed in the context of the non-COVID-19. Therefore, not criticizing the Chinese government to exercise the right to be wrong in Wuhan's governance of the COVID-19 epidemic, we should pay attention to whether it has been exercised reasonably. In addition, after effective control of the Wuhan's COVID-19 situation, new subordinate rights have been formed. The right to free migration, education at schools, and free association are temporarily prohibited, which does not belong to the violation of human rights. However, many Western people are unwilling to accept the new connotation of subordinate rights in the situation of the COVID-19, and insist the right to life, freedom, and property in the non-COVID-19 context. This deep-rooted liberalism makes it difficult to accept stay-at-home orders and business bans for them. It should be recognized that at the beginning of the COVID-19 governance, China and the West were at the same starting point: How to exercise the right to be wrong and explore the right to freedom at the level of subordinate rights needed for COVID-19 governance.

We are sure that if the United States would like to perform the right to be wrong, she should exercise it better than China's government possibly. However, she refused the new trial-and-error practice strictly for the traditional liberalism. When their leaders are still bound by it, the COVID-19 epidemic will do more harm to Western people more deeply.

Under the pretext that Western countries are different from China, they are not willing to accept China's plan. Since the creation of liberalism by Locke, the rights to freedom have not been divided into the right to be wrong as an original right and subordinate ones in the non-innovative fields. Therefore, Error-Tolerantism regards that the Declaration of Independence as the master piece in human history helps America become the greatest country in the world, but its defects hidden in liberalism have been kept and possibly do harm to the people. The Declaration of Independence believes that the right to freedom cannot be transferred; neither do the right to be wrong as an original right. So where does the president's right to be wrong come from? Since the people cannot transfer it to the political elites, does the president empower it to himself? On the other hand, the right to be wrong in the public domain should come from people's empowerment in the democratic countries. Therefore, it can be transferred actually. Individuals have different abilities to try and err, and the resources of the whole society are limited after all. In order to reduce the cost of trial and error, the people should be willing to transfer the right to be wrong to professionals who should empower corresponding subordinate rights to the people meanwhile, which is called the "ABC model". Error-Tolerantism holds that subordinate rights to freedom belonging to individuals cannot be transferred, which is consistent with liberalism. The right to be wrong as an original right can be transferred as long as the principle of mutual empowerment is recognized and implemented. Therefore, Error-Tolerantism regards that it is wrong to juxtapose the right to life and the right to freedom in the "Declaration of Independence". The right to freedom in the field of innovation, right to be wrong, should be listed separately from others'. The right to life, freedom, and property in the field of non-innovation can be juxtaposed, because they are all at the subordinate level.

Understood from the right to be wrong as an original right, the connotation and quantity at the level of subordinate one are dynamic. However, most of leaders and scholars from the West and many developing countries, as well as Western Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) all over the world, observe the world only from the angle of liberalism and they have not recognized that it does not work for fighting the COVID-19. On March 19, 2020, Human Rights Watch published a report "Human Rights Dimensions of COVID-19 Response". It proposes recommendations for governments to address the outbreak while respecting fundamental human rights, including the rights to health, free expression, nondiscrimination, and freedom of traveling (Human Rights Watch, 2020). It sounds reasonable, but Human Rights Watch has not identified that freedom misunderstood by liberalism can also harm the health and even lives of the people on the background of the COVID-19 epidemic. On the other hand, because the United States has criticized the situation of human rights in China every year, they have been greatly improved, as shown that China would like to listen to the criticism of the United States, and Chinese people have indeed benefited from it. That is an objective fact. However, under the background of the coronavirus, the inherent flaws in liberalism since Locke have begun to punish the United States.

If the COVID-19 pandemic is over soon, the misunderstanding of the concept of freedom will not hurt the American people too severely. But the problem is that the COVID-19 is highly infectious and variable, resulting in its ability to harm individuals for a long time. So the damage to the American people caused by the misunderstanding of the concept of freedom becomes more lasting. Trump rejected China's definition of

freedom for a long time. Actually until July 11, Trump accepted the importance of wearing masks (BBC.News, 2020b), but the number of people infected in the United States has reached more than three million. Trump's attacks on democratic governors are also based on a misunderstanding of the concept of freedom. When he called out "Free Minnesota!", "Free Michigan!", and "Free Virginia!" (Archyde, 2020), he just returned the right to be wrong as an original right needed for the governance of the COVID-19 pandemic to the people. The president was unwilling to undertake it, and did not allow the democratic governor to undertake it. That is in line with the Declaration of Independence in which the right to freedom cannot be transferred to political leaders. President Trump did not actively exercise the right to be wrong to fight the epidemic, but as a result, he respected the Declaration of Independence. Kristi Noem, governor of South Dakota, holds that it was up to individuals, not governments to decide whether they should go to work, worship, or stay at home (Kenton, 2020). She also advocates respecting the people's inalienable right to be wrong. Actually if we respect the idea that the right to be wrong as an original right cannot be transferred as stated in the Declaration of Independence, the United States does not need to govern the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before George Floyd was knelt to death, the policeman had physical contact with him, but neither of them wore masks (Murphy, 2020). Error-Tolerantism holds that in the course of COVID-19 governance, China has redefined the connotation of freedom at the subordinate rights level, such as keeping social distance and wearing masks etc. Therefore, the police should wear masks when enforcing the law to protect the citizens and themselves; similarly, citizens should wear face masks in case they infect others or get infected by the COVID-19. Failing to do so has violated everyone's human rights according to Error-Tolerantism. But Floyd's death made us ignore mutual violations of human rights between the police and the citizen. The subsequent riots triggered by the death further led to the spread of the COVID-19. It can be seen that the stubborn President Trump's rejection of China's definition of the concept of freedom at the subordinate rights level during the COVID-19 pandemic has constantly harmed the American people deeply. In fact, President Trump is very sensitive about the right to define the concept of freedom. He refused to wear a mask and in a sense, he refused to accept China's definition of the concept of freedom in the COVID-19 pandemic. In the past more than three hundred years, the definition of freedom has always been the patent of Western scholars, so it is impossible to easily give way to China to define it. But Error-Tolerantism believes that the misunderstanding of the concept of freedom in the United States and other Western countries has led to the spread of the COVID-19 in those countries, even out of control, and finally turns into a public security crisis, which is essentially a human rights disaster. The challenge for the United States in the future is how to maintain its own advantages and be willing to give up its arrogance and learn from other countries, such as China.

Conclusion

Liberalism is the foundation of the United States, but also the way of life of the American people. If there are serious defects in the theory of liberalism, then under certain conditions, they will severely hurt the American. On January 23, 2020, China blocked Wuhan city; then American media instinctively criticized it from the perspective of liberalism. The West thought that the closure of Wuhan city was at the expense of people's rights to freedom, but actually liberalism has made two fundamental mistakes, the first of which is to criticize the right to be wrong as an original right with subordinate rights, i.e., the United States turns to the subordinate rights formed in the context of non-COVID-19 to criticize China's the right to be wrong as an original right in the process of governing the COVID-19; the second is to fail to realize that the rational

implementation of the right to be wrong will produce new subordinate ones. Whether it constitutes an infringement of rights to life and property in non-innovative fields depends on whether the right to be wrong as an original right is reasonably exercised. After the lockdown of Wuhan city, people's daily needs were effectively guaranteed, and the COVID-19 was quickly and effectively controlled, which fully demonstrated that Chinese government reasonably exercised the right to be wrong and protected people's subordinate ones to the greatest extent, although the balance between protecting people's lives and their livelihoods is difficult to reach in China.

When China's COVID-19 epidemic governance has been very effectively implemented, it will be shifted from an innovative to a non-innovative field, i.e., from exercising the right to be wrong to that to be right. Conversely, if China's program is not implemented and the COVID-19 spread, it will be regarded as a violation of people's rights to life, freedom, and property in non-innovative fields. Confronted with the COVID-19 epidemic, the US president, governors, and the people have not realized the internal relationship between the right to be wrong as an original right and subordinate ones, and refused to accept the connotation of the right to freedom at the subordinate level defined by China during the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes the coronavirus unable to be effectively controlled in the United States. It can be seen that liberalism did not know how to interpret the lockdown of Western countries, such as Italy and Spain, after wrongly criticizing the closure of Wuhan, but only muddled through by using double standards. However, Error-Tolerantism interprets them in a unified way: Wuhan, Italy, and other cities were closed, which is a major trial-and-error practice, exercising the right to be wrong as an original right. The COVID-19 has given China and Western countries an equal opportunity to explore the connotation of freedom at the level of subordinate rights; however, liberalism makes them generally reluctant to accept the new connotation of the right to freedom. American people trust their core value of liberalism, which helps them conquer many difficulties and become a great nation. They sincerely criticized Wuhan's closure, but do not realize that there are key defects in liberalism that possibly punish them violently in a special situation. In the political field, the United States is indeed ahead of China in the protection of human rights, but in terms of the governance of the COVID-19 epidemic, Error-Tolerantism accepts that China is ahead of the United States in protecting human rights.

China's current distress is that the governance of the COVID-19 epidemic has been effective, but due to lack of theoretical support, she has been criticized by the West. Since 1840, China has gradually become a good student of the West, although she has not been fully westernized. China's test scores have reached excellent in fighting the COVID-19, even better than the West as a teacher, but it is still criticized or even slandered by them. The United States and other Western countries are just the opposite. Although their thinkers improve their core values of liberalism through continuous self-criticism, they basically refuse to learn from China's experience. Especially after the disintegration of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991, the United States became the strongest country since the Roman Empire, similar to the great Tang Dynasty in ancient China. That is to say, since the 1990s, liberalism has basically not developed greatly, although communitarianism has continued to challenge it since the 1980s. The 2008 financial crisis was a major opportunity to rebuild liberalism, but before the groundbreaking results were formed, the world ushered in the raging COVID-19 epidemic. This was a major opportunity for the integration of Chinese and Western values to fight the special disease, but it became the fuse and even the main battlefield for further conflicts between China and the West.

Error-Tolerantism holds that in spite of the over 300 years' development of liberalism, it fails to distinguish an original right and the subordinate ones, and thus fails to understand the connotation of freedom

from a dynamic perspective, making it difficult to stop the spread of the COVID-19. Meanwhile, it is a short-sighted behavior for the Chinese people to deny all the outstanding achievements of the United States in politics, economy, science, technology, culture, and education just because of China's success in fighting the epidemic. The United States is still a great country. If it overcomes the flaws in liberalism, it will be reborn. Besides, it can accept all kinds of criticism from different countries around the world, and this kind of tolerance is worth our learning. China, however, still needs to learn from the advanced Western ideas and should integrate her own culture with Western values. Error-Tolerantism was born under this background: firstly, returning to the state of nature as the theoretical starting point of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau; secondly, learning from Karl Popper's theory of knowledge and the method of trial and error; thirdly, combining the state of nature with the trial-and-error practice of China's Reform and Opening-up. Based on above, we can construct the rights paradigm of Error-Tolerantism: the right to be wrong as an original right and mutual empowerment theory. While the United States criticized the closure of Wuhan as a violation of human rights, the virus cost more than 180,000 American lives, for liberals lack a dynamic understanding of freedom. The practice of wearing masks shows that in the fight against COVID-19 epidemic, China respects Mill's freedom principles more than the West, who seems to have forgotten them. Chinese people, accustomed to learning from the West, have been surprised to see that the United States refused to learn the anti-epidemic measures from China. Is it so difficult to wear masks? Not at all in China, but yes in the US. Furthermore, from the perspective of Error-Tolerantism, President Trump's delayed response to the epidemic shows that there is a serious inherent defect in American's core value of liberalism, which needs to be remedied.

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