INTERSECTING PERSPECTIVES:
A COMPARATIVE DIALOGUE ON RESPECT
IN CONFUCIAN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHIES

CHUAN CHIH HSU, ANTONIO CALDERÓN & CHIA SHIH SU

ABSTRACT: *Present study analyzes the concept of respect in both Confucius' and Western philosophical traditions. It reveals the differences in interpretation and practice of respect due to their distinctive cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts. Confucius' philosophy emphasizes respect towards authority, traditions, and the elderly through dedication and commitment, while Western philosophy, primarily Aristotle's perspective, emphasizes reciprocal respect and the inherent rights of individuals. Both systems of thought, although contrasting, seek to promote values fostering cooperation, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. Despite their varied conceptualizations of respect, the ultimate goal remains the same – to provide ethical and moral guidance for a harmonious society. This study contributes to an enriched understanding of respect, facilitating a respectful intercultural dialogue.*

Keywords: *Confucius' philosophy, ethical and moral guidance, intercultural dialogue, respect, Western Philosophy*

1. INTRODUCTION

Respect stands as an unavoidable pillar in the dynamics of human interactions, having been the subject of philosophical inquiry for centuries. However, the multiplicity of cultures and societies has given rise to a diversity of interpretations and approaches to the notion of respect (Kant 2008; Ames 2022; Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis 2021). Confucius' philosophy, emerged in the dawn of ancient China, emphasizes the transcendence of respect towards authority, the elderly, and traditions (Ames 2022). In contrast, Western philosophical traditions, particularly those rooted in ancient Greece, especially Aristotle's reflections in his work '*Nicomachean Ethics*', assert that

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HSU, CHUAN CHIH: Professor of Language Area, Catholic University of Maule, Chile. Email: chuan@ucm.cl
CALDERÓN, ANTONIO: Professor of Religious and Philosophical Sciences, Catholic University of Maule, Chile. Email: acalderon@ucm.cl
SU, CHIA SHIH: Professor of Basic Sciences, Catholic University of Maule, Chile. Email: ciaushih@ucm.cl

humans possess inherent rights and responsibilities that must be recognized and honored by society as a whole, focusing on the primacy of individual rights and the notion of reciprocal respect (Irwin 2019). These discrepancies in perspective raise questions about the essence of respect and its functionality within human relationships. In Confucius' philosophy, respect is based on dedication and commitment, understood as a virtue expressed through specific actions in the realm of intricate human and interpersonal relationships (Ames 2022; Wong 2021; Hu 2019). This virtue is part of the concept of *Ren*, which translates as "human empathic reciprocity and moral sentiments", and is related to generosity, integrity, vigilance, and benevolence (Chon & Hao 2020, 6). To be considered a respectful individual and worthy of respect, it is essential to adequately fulfill these responsibilities, which requires continuous self-evaluation and rigorous personal commitment.

In *the Analects*, Confucius highlights sincerity, diligence, and respect as foundations of valued behavior, indicating their universal importance for success and trust. He stresses consistency in their practice, regardless of the context (*Analects* 15.5)[1].

In the realm of Western philosophical traditions, Aristotle indirectly addressed respect in his writings and teachings on ethics, politics, and philosophy in general. By promoting the development of ethical character, Aristotle advocated learning to consider the rights and needs of others, simply stating it as: "we all should be thinking about what benefits other individuals, not only ourselves" (Koehn 2022, 9). In the political realm, he argued that laws and institutions must respect and protect individual rights according to their contribution to community welfare (Malik *et al.* 2021). Furthermore, through self-respect, self-reflection, and self-knowledge, Aristotle emphasized the importance of respecting our own needs, limits, and capabilities, which facilitates respect towards others (Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis 2021). Although he did not explicitly address the concept of respect, his ideas reflect an implicit understanding of respect towards oneself and others.

The purpose of this article lies in delving into the understanding of the notion of respect in the context of various cultural philosophies, as well as its influence on social organization and morality. It also aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

1) What are the similarities and differences between Confucius' and Western conceptions of respect?
2) How do ideas about respect influence social practices and norms in Confucius' and Western philosophical cultures?
3) How do the concepts of authority, hierarchy, and duty in Confucius' teachings and Western philosophical traditions relate to respect?

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[1] 子張問行。子曰：「言忠信，行篤敬，雖蠻貊之邦行矣；言不忠信，行不篤敬，雖州里行乎哉？立，則見其參於前也；在輿，則見其倚於衡也。夫然後行。」子張書諸紳。（論語. 衛靈公）

2. RESPECT AND ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO CONFUCIUS' PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Confucius, the distinguished philosopher of ancient China, attributed a transcendental significance to respect and its consequences in the social sphere. In the Confucian worldview, respect becomes an indispensable component of the virtue called *Li*, which is often interpreted as 'ritual' or 'courtesy'. *Li* is a highly complex concept that encompasses a vast spectrum of elements, encompassing social etiquette, appropriate behavior, and harmonious relationships both between heaven and humans and among humans themselves.

Social etiquette, in Confucius' thought, constitutes a crucial element of *Li*, and refers to specific actions that demonstrate self-discipline, awareness of the environment, and respect for the privacy and personal space of others. For illustration, when ascending a carriage, maintaining an upright posture and grasping the ropes with both hands denotes prudence and security. Refraining from turning around, speaking in a loud tone, or pointing at objects are actions that likewise embody the essence of *Li* and contribute to fostering harmonious relationships and a respectful society (*Analects* 10.17; Raphals 2014)[2].

Appropriate behavior is grounded in the notion of upholding robust ethical and moral integrity in all facets of life, both in private and public contexts. Confucius emphasized the importance of maintaining unblemished ethical and moral principles, regardless of the specific circumstances in which one may find oneself (*Analects* 13.19; Loy 2013)[3]. In the previously referenced *Analects* verse, Confucius delineates two pivotal perspectives on respect: '*Gong Jing*' (embodied respectfulness) and '*Zhong*' (loyalty and reverence aligned with societal norms and rituals).

Gong Jing, a fundamental concept deeply embedded in Confucius' philosophy, captures the profound essence of inner deference and respect. This is not just a superficial expression of politeness; it embodies the very marrow of appropriate behavior, serving as a lucid reflection of the rich tapestry of ethical and moral principles championed by Confucius. Such a concept plays a pivotal role in shaping societal interactions, laying the groundwork for harmonious relationships. By cultivating *Gong Jing*, societies can foster an environment where mutual respect doesn't merely exist but flourishes, fostering a culture where reverence and admiration become the cornerstones of daily interactions. This delicate weave of internal sentiment and external comportment is quintessential for the creation of a society deeply imbued with genuine respect and understanding, a vision that Confucius ardently advocated for (Lu 2021).

Zhong, as eloquently defined by Mou (2004), encapsulates the profound essence of "one's sincere and devoted moral commitment to those culturally and historically established social institutions such as moral rules and duties, no matter for whom […]" (3). Yet, its scope extends far beyond individual fealty. In its heart lies a much deeper allegiance — a steadfast dedication to the greater community, transcending personal

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[2] 升車，必正立執綏。車中，不內顧，不疾言，不親指。(論語．鄉黨)
[3] 樊遲問仁。子曰：「居處恭，執事敬，與人忠。雖之夷狄，不可棄也。」(論語．子路)

loyalties and reaching out to a collective ideal. In championing *Zhong*, one not only affirms individual rights but also ardently advocates for the rights of the collective, harmoniously weaving the threads of individual and communal interests. This advocacy nurtures an ecosystem of mutual respect, facilitating harmonious coexistence and sculpting ethical pathways. By elevating the scope of *Zhong* beyond the confines of traditional social hierarchies, it emphasizes an all-encompassing commitment, one that resonates with the noble aspirations of the '*junzi*' ideal. Drawing from the profound discourses of Nivison and Ivanhoe, it becomes increasingly evident that the ethos of *Zhong* doesn't merely pay homage to social and ritual norms. Instead, it delves deeper, earnestly aspiring for an equilibrium in the tapestry of community rights and obligations (Mou 2004; Mou 2019).

According to Confucius' philosophy, the relationships between heaven and man, as well as among human beings, are fundamental to the preservation of a society imbued with respect and harmony. Confucius professed a fervent devotion and respect towards his ancestors and deities. He did not consider the act of paying tribute as a mere formality or a tradition devoid of meaning; rather, he approached it with seriousness and conceived that the spirits of his ancestors and deities were present and receptive during the tribute ceremony (*Analects* 3.12; Cline 2014)[4]. Confucius argued that, while it is essential to provide for parents, this is not enough to manifest authentic filial piety. Even animals can be cared for by someone, but what differentiates humans is the ability to establish an emotional and respectful relationship with their progenitors (*Analects* 2.7; Luo 2012)[5].

2.1 DECIPHERING RESPECT: CONTEMPORARY INSIGHTS INTO CONFUCIUS' PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALS

In this section, we juxtapose ancient Confucian teachings with modern insights, notably from esteemed scholars Roger T. Ames, David Wong, and Bo Mou. Their profound expertise in Chinese philosophy and comparative ethics illuminates Confucius' conceptions of respect. This section not only provides a rich, contemporary perspective but also facilitates a nuanced dialogue between Confucian and Western philosophies, thereby deepening our research's analytical depth.

Roger T. Ames, a renowned scholar of Chinese philosophy, has written extensively on Confucianism and its various aspects, including the concept of respect. In Confucius' philosophy, respect is a central value that shapes interpersonal relationships, social hierarchy, and ethical behavior (Ames 2022; Zhang 2020). Furthermore, Confucius emphasized the importance of respect as part of the practice of *Ren*, which can be translated as humanity, benevolence, or kindness (Jia & Liu 2022).

In addition, Ames (2022) delves into the essential notions of respect in Confucius' philosophy, articulating his reflections around the key concepts of the Five Relationships, filial piety, reciprocity, and mutual respect. Ames illuminates how

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[4] 祭如在，祭神如神在。子曰：「吾不與祭，如不祭。」（論語．八佾）

[5] 子游問孝。子曰：「今之孝者，是謂能養。至於犬馬，皆能有養；不敬，何以別乎？」（論語．為政）

Confucius formulated his conceptualization of respect within the framework of the Five Relationships, which outline the interactions between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, as well as between friends (Hershock & Ames 2021; Li 2020). Confucius identified in these relationships the foundation of a harmonious society, emphasizing respect for the roles and responsibilities implicit in each relationship as the central axis for preserving social order and harmony.

Therefore, respect not only emerges as an intrinsic value in Confucius' philosophy, but also as an indispensable virtue for building a stable and functional society. As Ames et al. (2021) indicate, "for Confucians, filial piety had to do with following every rule and performing every rite related to the life, death, and burial of one's parents or to the offering of sacrifices to one's ancestors" (34). Ames underscores the cardinal importance of filial piety, which involves showing respect, obedience, and reverence towards parents and elders. The practice of filial piety is presented, in his view, as an essential element for the formation of moral character and the promotion of social stability (Liu & Liu 2021).

Finally, Ames examines Confucius' philosophical principle of reciprocity, summarized in the aphorism: "Do not do unto others what you do not wish for yourself" (*Analects* 12.2; *Analects* 15.24; Jia 2022)[67]. This principle highlights the transcendence of treating others with respect and consideration, thereby cultivating harmonious and cooperative relationships (Barbalet 2021).

David Wong, a distinguished scholar in comparative philosophy and Chinese ethics, has engaged with Confucius' philosophy and its concept of respect in various ways. His work explores the nuanced and context-sensitive nature of Confucius' moral reasoning. While not focusing exclusively on respect, his analysis of Confucian ethics has implications for understanding the concept within the Confucian framework (Wong 2015; 2019; 2021). In this regard, it is important to note that some of the key points found by Ames (2022) coincide with David Wong's findings regarding the concept of respect in Confucius' philosophy. Some of these points include: the importance of empathy and compassion, and the role of virtues which we present below:

• Empathy and compassion play a crucial role in fostering mutual respect and cooperation, key elements for maintaining social harmony and stability in communities, following Confucius' philosophical ideals (Wong 2021; Hu 2019). These virtues enable people to develop a greater sensitivity towards others, which ultimately facilitates them to make ethical decisions and assume moral responsibilities in their daily life.

• Virtues have also been considered as a fundamental element in building moral character and fostering harmonious relationships since ancient times. Wong's study (2015) on Confucian ethics highlights the fundamental role of virtues in the

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[6] 仲弓問仁。子曰：「出門如見大賓，使民如承大祭。己所不欲，勿施於人。在邦無怨，在家無怨。」仲弓曰：「雍雖不敏，請事斯語矣。」（論語．顏淵）

[7] 子貢問曰：「有一言而可以終身行之者乎？」子曰：「其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。」（論語．衛靈公）

development of moral character and the fostering of harmonious relationships. Virtues are essential in Confucianism and involve showing respect and consideration towards others, especially towards parents, elders, and those in positions of authority. Virtues or '*De*', described "as one of the grounding concepts of Confucius' aesthetic cosmology and as the authoring concept that plays a significant role in constructing the moral universe" (Yao 2021, 2), are considered the driving force in the development of Confucian traditions in areas such as education, politics, family, and community life. For example, *Li* functions as a 'social grammar' that encompasses norms and practices that establish mutually respectful behavior in everyday social interactions. This concept suggests that compliance with these norms can lead to harmonious relationships and effective communication within society (Wong 2020).

Bo Mou, a philosopher predominantly focuses on the confluence of Eastern and Western philosophies, emphasizing comparative and constructive engagement approaches. From Mou (2004), we can notice how *Ren* concept from the '*Fan Chi asked about Ren*'[8] verse was elucidated in a broader and deeper dimension than merely as an interpersonal benevolence. While conventional understanding may regard *Ren* as a manifestation of love and care towards others, this specific passage highlights that it begins with self-respect and introspection. Confucius' first advice on practicing *Ren* — "Be respectful in dwelling by oneself" (19) — underscores the intrinsic value and reverence one should hold for their own life. This self-respect is not just an end in itself but forms the bedrock upon which respect and care for others are built. Therefore, the term *Ren*, as interpreted by Mou, encapsulates a holistic reverence that encompasses both self and others, and is foundational to all acts of benevolence and altruism.

This self-respect quality can be easily detected from a Confucian noble person, i.e., *junzi*, as evidenced in *Analects* 16:10, Confucius accentuates the *junzi*'s intrinsic association with *Zhong* in his speech, suggesting sincerity and commitment to one's societal roles and obligations, often articulated through words. This juxtaposition between *Zhong* and *junzi* implies that true nobility is manifest in an individual's genuine dedication to duties, irrespective of the social status of those involved (Mou 2004). Drawing parallels to the aforementioned understanding of respect, it can be inferred that both qualities — *Zhong* and respect — in Confucian thought, converge on the idea of intrinsic value: valuing one's duties and oneself before extending this reverence to others, thereby outlining the blueprint for an ethically harmonious society.

3. PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESPECT IN WESTERN SOCIETY

In the intellectual traditions of the Western hemisphere, numerous philosophers have engaged deeply with ethical discourses, particularly the construct of respect. Our investigation focuses primarily on three eminent philosophers, whose contributions underscore the centrality of respect as a foundational value within the edifice of human

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[8] See footnote 3.

nature. These philosophers, each providing unique perspectives on this vital ethical concept, are elucidated as follows.

Immanuel Kant, a Prussian philosopher of the Enlightenment, was the first and most important representative of criticism and a precursor of German idealism. In his work, the '*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*', he establishes the foundation of his ethics centered on the principle of human dignity and respect for the autonomy of the individual. According to Kant, human beings are rational beings capable of making free and autonomous decisions, which gives them unique dignity and an intrinsic value that must be respected. Moreover, he posits that the morality of an action does not depend on its consequences, but on the intention that underlies it. It involves actions that are performed out of duty, that is, out of respect for moral duty and the moral law, which is universal and unconditional, expressed in a categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time want it to become a universal law" (Kant 2008, 241). In this way, respect for autonomy and the dignity of the person implies always treating them as an end in themselves, and not as a means to achieve one's own interests. That is, it means that people cannot be used as instruments to achieve benefits contrary to their own will. Therefore, Kant argues that freedom and dignity are inherent to each human being. Respect for human dignity is an obligation to treat each person as an autonomous and free being, capable of making their own decisions and acting according to their own will. That is, there is an implication that we cannot use others for our own ends, manipulating or coercing them to do what we want. Therefore, we must respect their autonomy and consider them as free and independent beings. Kant's entire argument about respect for human dignity is the basis of morality and ethics. Above all, in respect for human rights (UN, 2023). In treating others as autonomous and free beings, we can understand and consider that our actions are morally justified. Otherwise, we would be violating their dignity and considering them as a mere object or an instrument for our own ends. This point is essential when understanding morality and ethics, as a fundamental basis for living in a just and free society.

Emmanuel Levinas, a French philosopher of Lithuanian-Jewish origin, made significant contributions to the subject of respect in Western society through his ethics of the 'face of the other' and his responsibility for this other. He is known for emphasizing the ethics of respect for the other, particularly critiquing traditional philosophy which often assumes the form of ontology: "a reduction of the Other to the same, by means of a neutral and intermediary term that ensures the understanding of being" (Levinas 2002, 67). According to him, this approach neglects ethical responsibility towards the other. In his seminal work '*Totality and Infinity*', Levinas develops a critique of traditional Western philosophy which focuses solely on knowledge and the understanding of reality through reason and objectivity. He proposes an ethics of responsibility towards the other that goes beyond reason and objectivity. Levinas asserts that the other is a crucial figure in human experience and that ethics must be based on respect for the other.

The other is a human being who presents himself to us in an unexpected and demanding way; he manifests himself to our eyes and thus signals that he calls us to be

responsible for his welfare in the present. He puts it as follows, "The face is signification, and signification without context" (Levinas 1991, p. 80). This ethics of the other cannot be seen as a rational choice or calculation, but rather as an unconditional responsibility towards the other. This other, not invited by us to share our life, is nevertheless present here in history. Therefore, Levinas's contribution to the subject of respect in Western society is significant. In the manifestation of the face, the sentient, even when captured, transforms into total resistance to apprehension. His entire argument about respect for the other must be understood as an unconditional ethical imperative, not as a matter of reciprocity or exchange. In other words, respect for the other is a duty we must fulfill simply because the other is a human being. This respect for the other implies an attitude of openness and listening towards the other, which signifies the obligation to step out of ourselves and recognize the importance of the other, even if it challenges our own identity or beliefs.

Levinas shows us that respect for the other is an obligation, an essential ethic, which cannot be reduced to a mere social or legal duty, but begins in the interpersonal, face-to-face relationship. In his philosophy, the face of the other is the most evident and concrete epiphany of alterity, that is, the radical and irreducible difference of the other with respect to oneself. The face of the other calls us to responsibility and generates a demand to recognize his dignity and uniqueness as a person, regardless of any other aspect such as race, gender, religion or social position. This is all to be grounded in empathy and love, thus aiming to overcome the indifference and violence that has characterized Western society.

Finally, Levinas's contribution to the issue of respect in Western society is based on an ethics and responsibility towards the other, where the face of the other becomes the starting point and the ethical horizon of all moral action and reflection.

Hannah Arendt, indisputably, is the German-Jewish philosopher who made numerous and significant contributions to the study of politics, freedom, and violence in Western society. In her text '*The Crisis in the Republic*', she discusses the respect among human beings, focusing on the importance of plurality and equality in political and social life. In her argument, she indicates that the lack of respect and mutual recognition among people is one of the primary causes of the crisis facing the republic today and the greater decline of politics. She refers as follows: "But it is true that the strong fraternal feelings engendered by collective violence have seduced many good people with the hope that a new community and a 'new man' would emerge from it" (Arendt 2015, 125).

The fundamental element is the respect that must prevail among human beings, both for communal living and for the proper functioning of politics within a republic or state. Respect implies the recognition of the equal dignity of each human being, their freedom, and their capacity to participate in the public sphere as a citizen. Arendt strongly criticizes discrimination, exclusion, and oppression as modes of disrespect towards people, as these conceal and deny their humanity and capacity to be an active part of political life and community.

For her, the right to life is an undeniable fundamental necessity, and the pursuit of happiness is an expression of this need. Indeed, happiness and life are closely related,

as happiness is a key ingredient for a fulfilling and satisfying life. However, it's essential to note that true happiness cannot equate to good fortune, as the latter is an ephemeral and capricious situation that cannot be sought. Often, people feel unsatisfied even when they have found good fortune, as they long to retain it as if it were an endless source of 'good things'. Therefore, the pursuit of true happiness should not focus on chasing good fortune but finding joy and satisfaction in the simple things in life (Arendt 2009).

It is important to emphasize the value of respect among human beings, which must be based on recognizing the dignity and freedom inherent in each person, these being fundamental rights in themselves. To achieve this respect, "human plurality must be considered, which is a basic condition for both action and speech, and it has a dual character of equality and distinction" (Arendt 2009, 200).

This plurality manifests itself in the diversity of opinions, perspectives, and ways of life present in society and is essential to enriching political dialogue and making the necessary decisions for society. It's crucial to note that the homogenization of society and the imposition of a truth or ideology are forms of totalitarianism that violate the respect and equality of citizens. Therefore, plurality should be respected in the public sphere and considered as a fundamental element of the human condition. This not only allows for the peaceful coexistence of various ideas and ways of life but also fosters creativity and social progress in an increasingly globalized world.

Arendt's contribution to the topic of respect in Western society lies in her insistence on respect as essential for human life and political freedom. The truth is that this consideration based on respect has to be the foundation of a just and pluralistic society, in which each person is valued equally, and also provided a space to develop their own identity and projections. Hence, she emphasizes the importance of action and speech in shaping human identity and dignity. In this sense, respect becomes a fundamental virtue for peaceful coexistence and the full realization of citizens in society.

4. THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF RESPECT IN CONFUCIUS' PHILOSOPHY AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHIES

In this section, we conduct a comparative analysis to provide answers to the research questions of this study in three parts: 1) Similarities and differences between the approaches of Confucius and Western philosophers, 2) Influence of this idea on social practices and norms, and 3) Respect in Confucius' and Western philosophical approaches towards authority, hierarchy, and duty in teaching.

4.1 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE APPROACHES OF CONFUCIUS AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS

To provide a lucid and succinct answer to the first research question – What are the similarities and differences between Confucius' and Western conceptions of respect? – we have chosen to systematize the information in a table that facilitates a quick and accessible visualization of the conclusions obtained through our investigation. In Table

1, we present the results corresponding to this aspect between Confucius' and Kantian philosophy.

Table 1. *Similarities and differences between respect in Confucius and Kant*

	Confucius / Immanuel Kant
Similarities	• Confucius and Kant stress the intrinsic value of human beings and the importance of respect in interpersonal relationships to maintain social harmony.
Differences	• Kantian ethics, focused on autonomy and dignity, contrasts with Confucius' philosophy, which emphasizes virtues and relationships. Kant proposes a universal categorical imperative from an individualistic perspective, while Confucius promotes group harmony and contextual adaptation. Both differ in their origin of duty: reason for Kant, roles and responsibilities for Confucius.

Source: own creation

Table 1 compares Confucius' and Kantian ethics, highlighting both convergences in intrinsic human value and interpersonal respect, as well as divergences in their moral foundation, collective vs individual orientation, and conceptualization of duty. While Kant emphasizes autonomy and universal principles, Confucius emphasizes virtues, interpersonal relationships, and specific roles in society.

Table 2 presents the common points and divergences between Confucius' philosophy and that of Emmanuel Levinas.

Table 2. *Similarities and differences between respect in Confucius and Levinas.*

	Confucius / Emmanuel Levinas
Similarities	• Confucius and Levinas both emphasize respect and ethics in interpersonal relationships as foundations of a harmonious society. They both underscore the responsibility towards others and collective well-being, highlighting the importance of recognizing the other over individual interests.
Differences	• Confucius' philosophy, based on Chinese traditions, emphasizes virtue, social roles, and reason for a harmonious life. Levinas, rooted in Jewish-Western thought, views the other as a unique human being, promoting an unconditional moral responsibility towards them and criticizing the Western emphasis on reason and objectivity.

Source: own creation

Table 2 shows that, although Confucius' philosophy and Levinas's thought coincide in valuing respect and collective responsibility, they differ in their cultural roots, perception of the other, and ethical foundations. While Confucius' philosophy focuses on social roles and virtue, Levinas emphasizes unconditional responsibility towards the other.

Next, we present the comparison between Confucius' and Hannah Arendt's thought in Table 3:

Table 3. *Similarities and differences between respect in Confucius and Arendt*

	Confucius / Hannah Arendt
Similarities	• Both Confucius' and Arendt's philosophy emphasize respect and the recognition of human dignity as fundamental for harmonious coexistence, reflected in the Confucian concept of "*Ren*" and Arendt's human rights.
Differences	• Confucius' and Arendt's philosophy differ in their focus on respect: Confucius emphasizes hierarchical relationships and moral virtues for social harmony, while Arendt values equality, plurality, and diversity in political and social life.

Source: own creation

Table 3 shows that Confucius' point of view and the thought of Arendt, although they value respect and human dignity, differ in other aspects. Confucius emphasizes hierarchical relationships and reciprocity, while Arendt focuses on equality and plurality. They also differ in their views on diversity, social stability, and the conception of virtue and morality.

4.2   INFLUENCE OF THESE IDEAS ON SOCIAL PRACTICES AND NORMS

To address the question raised in point 2 – How do ideas about respect influence social practices and norms in Confucian and Western cultures? – it is essential to highlight the cardinal importance of these conceptions in sustaining a peaceful and harmonious society in both cultural contexts (Yao 2021). Schwartz (2006) indeed emphasizes that cultural values can have a significant impact on how individuals reason, act, and establish connections with others.

Respect, with its different cultural interpretations, has a fundamental impact on interpersonal relationships, authority, and social norms. In the Confucian context, it is manifested through the ethics of hierarchical relationships, filial piety, and the principle of reciprocity (Feng 2017). In contrast, in Western culture, it is reflected in equal rights and equitable treatment, with democracy, the rule of law, and human rights as key examples.

The comparison between Confucius', Kantian, Levinasian, and Arendtian philosophies shows similarities in the importance of respect and human dignity, but also significant differences in moral foundations, individualistic or collectivist perspectives, universal principles and duties, as well as cultural and religious contexts (Yao 2021).

These divergences can have important consequences in society. Confucian culture may promote social harmony through filial piety and reciprocity but potentially limit individual freedom and creativity (Feng 2017). On the other hand, Western culture may

favor a more inclusive and democratic society but can also lead to a lack of respect for authority and social norms (Schwartz 2006).

In summary, conceptions and manifestations of respect have a significant impact on society, so it is crucial to reflect on these differences and seek a balance that promotes a just, democratic, and harmonious society (Yao 2021).

4.3 RESPECT IN CONFUCIUS' AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO AUTHORITY, HIERARCHY, AND DUTY IN EDUCATION

To address question 3 – How do the concepts of authority, hierarchy, and duty in the teachings of Confucius and Western philosophical traditions relate to respect? – it is necessary to highlight the notable differences between both approaches. Respect in Confucius' philosophy is based on interpersonal relationships and social roles, unlike Western philosophy, which emphasizes individual freedom and equality of rights (Smith, 2006). Although both share the importance of ethics in human relationships, the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas and Confucius differ in their perception of the other and ethical focus. While Confucius has cultural foundations that emphasize responsibility and hierarchical relationships, Levinas focuses more on responsibility towards the other (Gardner 2014).

On the other hand, although Hannah Arendt's thought and Confucius' philosophy emphasize human dignity, they differ in their approach to hierarchical relationships, plurality, and the role of virtue and morality. Arendt values diversity and plurality in the political and moral sphere, while Confucius focuses on virtue and morality within the framework of social relationships (Arendt 2009 and 2015; Calhoun 2004).
Presented in Table 4 is a concise summary encapsulating the aforementioned convergences and divergences between Confucius' and Western perspectives pertaining to the concept of respect:

Table 4. *Similarities and differences regarding respect in practice, social norms, authority, hierarchy, and duty in education.*

Similarities	Differences
Both conceptions of respect involve treating others appropriately, recognizing their dignity, and considering all their needs and desires.	Confucius' conception emphasizes family relationships and filial obedience, while the Western conception has a broader focus that extends to the community.
In both philosophies, respect is related to adhering to accepted social and cultural norms within a given community.	Confucius' conception values social harmony and the fulfillment of social roles and duties, while the Western conception values individual autonomy and freedom of choice.

In both philosophies, the ability to understand and empathize with others, recognize their perspectives and concerns, and show consideration towards them is valued.	Confucius' conception emphasizes social norms and cultural traditions passed down through generations, while the Western conception is primarily based on ethical principles and legal norms that may vary according to the laws and regulations of a society.

Source: own creation

Table 4 highlights significant similarities and differences between Confucius' and Western conceptions of respect. Confucius values family relationships and filial obedience, while Western philosophy emphasizes individual autonomy and freedom of choice. These divergences reflect different cultures, philosophies, and approaches to authority, hierarchy, and ethics, contributing to a deeper understanding and respectful dialogue between cultures.

5. DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

This section connects the findings of the analysis with existing literature and theories, evaluating their impact on prior knowledge. Limitations and areas for improvement are identified, providing guidance for future research.

5.1 IS IT POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT RESPECT IN WESTERN AND EASTERN SOCIETIES?

The question may seem obvious, however, as a living being, humans find themselves immersed in external and internal things that keep them in constant action. And to respond to those actions, we need to pause and answer thoughtfully. To begin the task of answering whether it is possible to talk about respect, we must turn to the tradition and understanding of ethics and morality in Western societies. The question could be whether ethics is a realm of reflection on morality and how it relates to the topic of respect. According to Gracia, in line with Zubiri's reflection, it is argued that ethics emerges as a discipline at a certain historical moment. In fact, the first systematic book on ethics was written by Aristotle in the 4th century BCE (Zubiri 1986; Gracia 2016). Ethics is the study of the morality of human actions. It is the science of determining values in human behavior and making decisions about what should be done in different circumstances and situations. In other words, ethics as a discipline does nothing more than reflect on those human actions and experiences. Where human reality, as a person, reaches a certain level of intellectual development, it immediately processes and formulates moral judgments. From this, moral values arise, which play a very important role in the life of a human being.

5.2 IS RESPECT A UNIVERSAL VALUE?

Respect is a universal value that is considered important in all cultures and societies, regardless of their geographical location or cultural origins (Hofstede 2001). This is precisely because every human being, in their attitudinal structure, must correspond to life from ethics and morality. Therefore, we can say that we are beings who should behave correctly and respect others with whom we share this context and life history, that is, those who accompany us on this journey and historical project. Therefore, respect in Western societies is very essential in many areas of private and public life. For example, respect for diversity and inclusion is a highly important topic for modern Western society. Many countries are enacting laws and public policies to protect minorities and ensure equal opportunities for all. On the other hand, there is also the expectation that people respect the rights and opinions of others, regardless of their gender, age, race, or religion (Mill 2003). It means that individuals are expected to treat others with courtesy and consideration and to be respectful in their social interactions. This generates good coexistence in society.

We must also note that, as in any society, there may be individuals or groups who violate and do not respect the norms of coexistence and are disrespectful. Nevertheless, in general, respect is a very important value in Western societies and is considered essential for social harmony and peaceful coexistence. However, on the other hand, we must also consider that Western societies face certain challenges to respect, such as discrimination, economic inequality, and political polarization (Putnam, 2000). Despite these challenges, respect remains a fundamental value in Western culture and is promoted in many aspects of daily life. Philosophy has played a role in reflecting upon and promoting respect at certain moments in history.

5.3 HOW CAN CONFUCIUS' AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHIES MUTUALLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SOCIETIES THAT ARE NOT NATIVE TO THEIR ORIGINS?

Confucius' philosophy can strengthen Western ethics, while the philosophies of Aristotle, Kant, Levinas, and Arendt can enrich East Asian ethics, providing fresh perspectives on respect, responsibility, and social engagement.

The following elucidates the potential bidirectional contributions of Confucius' and Western philosophies to the advancement and cultivation of societies beyond their original cultural boundaries (see Table 5a and 5b for further elucidation):

Table 5a. *Contributions of Confucius' philosophical approach to Western society*

Contribution	Detail	Authors supporting this viewpoint
Emphasis on moral virtue	Confucius upholds the importance of cultivating moral virtues such as righteousness (*Yi*), benevolence (*Ren*), and wisdom (*Zhi*). Adopting a virtue-based approach can complement the existing ethical foundations in Western society, fostering a greater emphasis on self-reflection and personal improvement.	Alzola et al. (2020); Jin (2021); Lawrenz (2021)
Appreciation of the role of rituals	Rituals (*Li*) are considered essential in Confucius' teaching as they contribute to maintaining social order and generating respect for traditions. Incorporating ritualistic practices into Western daily life can promote a stronger connection with history and culture, fostering a sense of community and belonging.	Gardner (2014); Ivanhoe (2017)
Promotion of social harmony	Confucius postulates that harmony (*He*) is essential for the well-being of society. This principle can be valuable in Western society, often characterized by polarization and fragmentation, by promoting dialogue and cooperation among different groups and cultures.	Lai (2019); Dinh et al. (2019); Ali (2020); Jin (2021)
Hierarchy and interpersonal relationships	Confucius' thought emphasizes the importance of the five fundamental relationships (*Wǔlún*), based on reciprocity and mutual respect. Adopting these principles can strengthen interpersonal relationships in Western society, contributing to the construction of solid support networks and the promotion of social stability.	Dinh et al. (2019); Bedford & Yeh (2020); Choi (2020)
Advocacy for education	Education is considered a central pillar in Confucius' philosophy, seen as a means for moral development and individual transformation. Adopting Confucius' perspective in Western education could foster greater attention to character formation and the transmission of ethical values, enriching the current educational approach.	Samier, & Hammad (2021); Li (2022); Lam (2023); Tan (2023)

Source: own creation

Table 5b. *Contributions of the Western philosophical approach to East Asian society*

Contribution	Detail	Authors supporting this viewpoint
Promotion of individuality	Western philosophers, such as Kant and Arendt, emphasize the importance of autonomy and individuality. This can contribute to a greater appreciation for individual rights and self-expression in East Asian societies, where collective well-being is sometimes prioritized.	El Kholi & Kwak (2019); Bedford & Yeh (2019)
Rationality and critical thinking	Western philosophies, such as Descartes' rationalism and Hume's empiricism, place emphasis on logical reasoning and critical thinking. These approaches can contribute to fostering a greater value for critical analysis and logic.	Bedford & Yeh (2020); Liang & Fung (2021)
Focus on humanistic norms and universal ethical principles	Western philosophers, such as Kant and Levinas, have proposed universal ethical systems based on moral principles that apply to all human beings. These approaches can complement and broaden existing ethical conceptions in East Asian societies, providing a more global perspective.	Acharya (2020); Yang et al. (2020)
Promotion of democracy and human rights	Many Western philosophies emphasize the importance of democratic principles and human rights. These concepts can contribute to the promotion of more inclusive and just societies.	Ahdanisa & Rothman (2021); Ginsburg (2021)

Source: own creation

Confucius' and Western philosophies can complement each other by combining virtues, rituals, and principles of harmony that Confucius posits with Western individuality, rationality, and democracy. This can promote more informed and cooperative intercultural dialogues in diverse cultural and philosophical contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

The comparative inquiry of Confucius' and Western philosophies regarding the concept of respect has led to a series of substantial findings. It is evident that, although both traditions value respect as a cardinal ethical principle, they present notable differences in their approaches and particular applications. These variations can largely be attributed to the diverse cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts that have shaped these systems of thought.

A meticulous analysis of the fundamental similarities and differences in the conceptualization and practice of this ethical value allows for a deeper perspective when contrasting respect from Confucius' and Western philosophies. This study, adopting a relativistic stance (Briskman 2020), has managed to overcome cultural and philosophical barriers, recognizing diversity and providing a more enriched and nuanced understanding of how respect manifests in different contexts.

The analysis in this study, 'Intersecting Perspectives: A Comparative Dialogue on Respect in Confucius' Philosophy and Western Philosophies', aims to offer a detailed and profound insight into the similarities and differences in the interpretation and practice of respect within these two philosophical streams. It is crucial to emphasize that, despite the different perspectives and approaches they may present, the Confucius' and Western philosophical traditions share a common starting point: *providing an ethical and moral guidance that enables individuals to build a better and more harmonious society*.

This research emphasizes that, although philosophical approaches may vary in their conceptualizations and applications of respect, the fundamental objective of both systems of thought remains the same: *promoting humanistic values that foster cooperation, understanding, and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities*.

Furthermore, this analysis underscores the relevance of adhering to a rigorous and sophisticated academic approach when dealing with intricate and multidimensional topics like respect, and potentially other universal values that could be the subject of future explorations within diverse philosophical traditions. Such studies, in their rigor and depth, contribute not only to the advancement of knowledge but also to the promotion of a more nuanced and respectful intercultural understanding. Thus, they significantly contribute to an enriched intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue, enabling individuals "to promote a dialogue between different perspectives, […], which requires an open attitude and the willingness to learn while engaging with different viewpoints" (Feng 2011 as cited by Sommier *et al*. 2022, 2).

In conclusion, the manuscript invites readers to reflect on the richness and diversity of philosophical perspectives surrounding respect and to consider how, despite their differences, they all can offer valuable lessons and guidance for the construction of a just, equitable, and understanding society.

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