

EVIDENCE FOR MARXISM'S CONTINUED ROLE IN CHINESE ECONOMIC
MODERNIZATION THEORY
AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

China's astounding economic growth over the last forty years has sparked debate among scholars over the source of this success and the future of China's economic and political reform, with a significant portion of this debate centered on the Washington and Beijing Consensuses. Responding to this debate, this paper compares the rhetoric of Marx and Engels with major Chinese Communist Party publications, such as speeches, policies, and study guides, and considers the impacts of Marxism's indirect arrival in China on later interpretations of the theory. This paper finds that Marxism is not a historic relic, but an active part of Chinese economic modernization theory with a direct ideological link shared from Marx's *Capital* to Xi Jinping's China Dream. This continuity is seen primarily in the continuation of a Soviet legacy, Mao's dialectics, and a Marxian sense of democracy.

Evidence for the Marxism's Continued Role in Chinese Economic Modernization

Theory: An Analysis

China's GDP was an unremarkable 67.9 billion RMB when the People's Republic of China was established, yet 63 years later in 2015, China reported its national GDP has 68 trillion RMB¹. While facing the traumas of the Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, Tiananmen Square, and weathering the 1996 Asian Economic Crisis and the 2008 Great Recession, China has achieved astounding economic growth unparalleled in its speed and magnitude. However, many have asked why China could make this leap from the "sick man of Asia"² to the second largest economy in the world when many other developing or former Soviet countries have failed. What has China done differently?

While some commenters credit the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) heavy involvement in the economy, especially in the 1980s, as assisting China's smooth transition from a socialist to capitalist economy or weathering various recessions, most point to successful implementation of neoliberal economic policy as the real source of China's success. Deng Xiaoping's decision to launch Reform and Opening (*gaige kaifang*) is considered the start of China's real modernization efforts that led to this boom in productivity. The program reduced collectivization, allowed for private businesses and a stock market, and most significantly,

¹ China Data Center-University of Michigan, "China Yearly Macro-Economics Statistics (National): Gross Domestic Product of China," *China Data Online*. Accessed April 24, 2017. <https://www.chinadataonline.org>. These statistics are from annual census and statistical yearbook data. These numbers do not account for inflation or changes in GDP definition, and face the same strategic over or underreporting suspicion all official Chinese statistics receive. These numbers should be viewed less as hard fact than general benchmarks for China's overall progress.

² See David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2008) for discussion of Chinese international relations and domestic situation pre-PRC.

opened China to foreign investment. Though it got off to a rough start in the 1980s as Deng balanced between Party factions and was accompanied by human rights and environmental controversies, since the 1990s, China's economic growth has been relatively stable and consistent. As talk now turns toward slowing growth, many recommend that the best course of action is to continue deregulation, solve the State Owned Enterprise (SOE) problems, and generally continue capitalist development.

However, this comes at a time when members of the CCP's upper echelons are reviving lingering legacies of Mao's leadership. Since current President Xi Jinping took office in 2013, scholars and media outside China have accused him of being the second high-ranking Party member in the last five years to encourage cultivation of a cult of personality,³ consolidating too much power from the rest of the Standing Committee, and for having too high a regard for the Mao era. Additionally, his widely publicized anti-corruption campaign that admonishes Party members for unnecessary extravagance is considered draconian and paralyzing. On top of this anxiety, the Central Committee recently awarding Xi the title "core leader" and his postponement of announcing a successor furthers uncertainty over China's expected democratization and economic liberalization.

While one explanation for this disconnect would be that the Xi administration has abandoned the spirit of Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening, another possibility is that the

³ The other is former Chongqing Party Secretary and Standing Committee-hopeful Bo Xilai, whose removal from the Party in 2012 and subsequent trial for corruption caused international scandal and led to speculation in the moment that he was "too red" for the CCP. For further discussion of the Bo Xilai Scandal, see Zachary Keck, "With Bo Xilai on Trial, China Adopts Chongqing Model," *The Diplomat*, August 21, 2013, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/08/with-bo-xilai-on-trial-china-adopts-chongqing-model/>. For further discussion on modern cults of personality in China, see Luwei Luqiu, "The Reappearance of the Cult of Personality in China," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 33.4 (Dec 2016): 289-307.

Party never accepted the capitalist democracy ideal of the West and many of its regional neighbors. In the early years of Reform and Opening, Donald J. Senese and John Bryan Starr both argued that despite the influx of capitalist development, China was still fundamentally socialist. Now 30 years after the launch of Reform and Opening, this paper will conduct an ideological comparison between Marx, Engels, and the five major Chinese leaders from Mao to Xi to similarly argue that China's economic modernization theory is still driven by Marxism-Leninism.

This paper focuses on the theory presented in Party study guides, theory papers, and speeches, and accounts for Marxism's initial development in Chinese society, as well as the legacy of early Soviet involvement. In doing so, it shows that current modernization theory, including Hu Jintao's Harmonious Society (*hexie shehui*) and initiatives surrounding Xi Jinping's China Dream (*Zhongguo meng*) still utilize elements of the Soviet Model, Mao's dialectics, and a Marxian⁴ concern for human well-being and development. Therefore, China's economic development discourse still has more in common with Soviet and original Marxian theories than the small government, capitalist ideal of the West. This paper therefore argues that while the CCP no longer looks to establish a pure communist society, there remains a strong ideological continuity from Marx to Xi that casts doubt on the supposed inevitability of China's adoption of liberal economics and democratization.

Models and Consensus: A Literature Review

In the last few decades, scholars have tried to account for China's rapid growth and have published various models of development with titles referencing a "China Model" or "Beijing

⁴ Marxian refers directly to Karl Marx and texts by Marx and Engels. Marxist refers to ideas or practices influenced by these texts either by Engels after Marx's death or other Marxist actors.

Consensus.” The dialogue surrounding the existence of a Chinese economic development model falls into two broad camps: those who see something unique in China’s development and those who do not. More specifically for a segment of that dialogue, the question is how close China’s development conforms to John Williamson’s Washington Consensus. Created in 1989 and subsequently revised, the Washington Consensus was Williamson’s theory on how Latin American countries could further economic growth based on what he assumed were widely agreed upon policies in Washington. In its original form, it consisted of ten points, which Kennedy summarizes as the following quotation:

1. Fiscal discipline
2. Prioritizing public expenditures priorities away from non-merit subsidies and toward public goods (e.g. health and education)
3. Tax reform that combines broad tax base with moderate marginal rates
4. Liberalized interest rates
5. A competitive exchange rate
6. Trade liberalization
7. Liberalization of inward foreign direct investment
8. Privatization
9. Deregulation to ease barriers of firms for entry and exit of sectors
10. Strong protection of property rights.⁵

This model has been considered to be closely in line with the policies recommended by the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO,⁶ and for that reason has become representative of liberal economics.

Then in 2004, Joshua Cooper Ramo of Goldman Sachs and Tsinghua University put forward a counter model based on his assessment of the Chinese development experience that he called the Beijing Consensus. This model had three elements: (1) China’s economic success stemmed from the government’s pursuit of innovation-based development, (2) China measured

⁵ Scott Kennedy, “The Myth of the Beijing Consensus,” in *Journal of Contemporary China* 19.65 (2010): 462-463.

⁶ *Ibid*, 464.

economic success in terms of sustainability and equality, not GDP increases, and (3) China promoted self-determination within its own borders and for other developing countries by opposing the Washington Consensus, globalizing on its own terms, pursuing soft power, and developing capabilities asymmetric to the US to balance, not challenge.⁷ While a highly flawed model, as a part of the broader field of Critical Theory, the idea of a Beijing Consensus has sparked a conversation on the inadequacies of the Washington Consensus and other Euro-American-centric development models.

Scott Kennedy and Arif Dirlik provide poignant criticisms of Ramo's model.⁸ While both scholars concede that the Beijing Consensus has strong symbolic resonance as an acknowledgement of China's success or as a counter to American hegemony, they dismiss Ramo's actual theorems as based on faulty analysis divorced from the actual historic conditions and legacies of the PRC's development.⁹ In contrast, they conclude that the Reform Era policies represent something closer to the Washington Consensus with Chinese characteristics than socialism. Kennedy goes on to argue that most so-called "innovations" in policy, such as the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) or gradual liberalization of the economy, are not unique to China and merely represent the correct implementation of the Washington Consensus. If other countries have not achieved satisfactory economic development, they were too dogmatic in their adoption of the Washington Consensus and to then follow a supposed Beijing Consensus would produce similar results of "economic and political crises."¹⁰ However, Dirlik disagrees with this dismissal

⁷ Kennedy, 467-468.

⁸ Arif Dirlik, "Beijing Consensus: Beijing 'Gongshi.' Who Recognizes Whom and to What End?" Pre-print version from http://www.globalautonomy.ca/global1/position.jsp?index=PP_Dirlik_BeijingConsensus.xml.

⁹ Kennedy, 467, 470; Dirlik, "Beijing," 2.

¹⁰ Kennedy, 472, 477.

of the China Model, writing that the Beijing Consensus serves as an active critique against the capitalist system by proposing an sustainable alternative for developing countries centered on the gradual implementation of Washington Consensus-reforms and the localization of global best practices to ease the societal stressors caused by rapid capitalist reforms.¹¹ While perhaps not unique, the articulation of these methods are important to acknowledge.

In a similar vein to Dirlik, Huang Yasheng argues that China has had two dominant economic models: one that in the 1980s followed most of the Washington Consensus and a statist model starting in the 1990s. Like Dirlik and Kennedy, Huang agrees that Ramo's model is based on contemporary policies and the bulk of China's modernization derives from neoliberal economics. But diverging from Dirlik's assessment of the Beijing Consensus as useful criticism and consistent with many scholars, he argues that China's economy has suffered from a reversal of Washington Consensus-style economics. In fact, he concludes his article by declaring, "There is a nontrivial prospect that the Chinese economy may stumble, and if and when it does, we at least know to whom to credit this development: the economic statism so enthusiastically endorsed by the Beijing Consensus."¹²

However, several scholars, seeing something unique in the Beijing Consensus, have argued that despite individual policy similarities with the Washington Consensus, the PRC has pursued an independent development model. Alex Fernandez Jilberto and Barbara Hogenboom demonstrate that dissatisfaction with the Washington Consensus and growing ties with China inspired many Latin American countries at the turn of this century to adopt policies or elect

¹¹ Dirlik "Beijing," 2.

¹² Yasheng Huang, "Debating China's Economic Growth: The Beijing Consensus or The Washington Consensus," in *The Academy of Management Perspectives* 24.2 (May 2010): 33, 34-41, 46.

leaders who follow China's example instead of America's. Compared to the small government and unregulated trade ideals of the Washington Consensus that "failed because little was done to deal with Latin America's weakness in infrastructure, human resources and technological development," countries such as Venezuela, Chile, and Brazil have embraced stronger, nationally-minded governments that range from overtly anti-American to modelling social democratic ideals.¹³ However, the corruption and political instability these countries have recently experienced begin to lend weight to Kennedy's assumption that the Beijing Consensus may produce similar results to the Washington Consensus if improperly implemented.

More concretely, Xin Li, Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard and Michael Jacobsen at the Asia Research Center of the Copenhagen Business School provide a ten-point model of their own interpretation of the Beijing Consensus that mirrors the Washington Consensus in terms of detailed policy explanations. However, where the Washington Consensus and the original Beijing Consensus are largely economics-focused, Li, Brodsgaard, and Jacobsen include political reforms as well. Their model is outlined as:

1. Observing local conditions in the implementation of best practices
2. Balancing a free market and a state-planned economy
3. Approach reform pragmatically
4. Observe and enforce policy sovereignty
5. Above all else, promote political stability
6. Without being isolationist, be economically and politically self-reliant
7. Upgrade and diversify industrialization
8. Promote economic and political innovation¹⁴
9. Careful and selective liberalization of financial markets

¹³ Alex E. Fernandez Jilberto and Barbara Hogenboom, *Latin America facing China: South-South Relations Beyond the Washington Consensus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010): 21, 185, 187, 191.

¹⁴ Also discussed by Dirlik, the Chinese government's transition from revolutionary to governing party, can be viewed as a form of innovation, as well as solutions to social welfare or non-standard democratic institutions, such as village self-governance.

10. By prioritizing economic development, a harmonious society will follow¹⁵

Though Kennedy might still argue these policies are not unique, they follow Dirlik's idea of a critique of current capitalist society. Certain features, such as advocating political stability, may seem like common sense advice, but one criticism of the original Washington Consensus is that it assumes too much. Kennedy quotes Moises Naim as saying, "The paradox is that any country capable of meeting such stringent requirements is already a developed country,"¹⁶ at least politically speaking. Effective political systems are implied in the Washington Consensus and the original Beijing Consensus, but it is potentially an area that may have contributed to China's successful economic development and should be included in these models.

This paper will not address the extent to which the PRC's economic policies follow the Washington Consensus or a version of the Beijing Consensus, but it does hold with the latter opinion that China has included a new factor absent from the Washington Consensus that has allowed it to achieve such rapid development. Dirlik states that the beneficial aspects of the Beijing Consensus stems from China's socialist legacy,¹⁷ a position that colors Huang and Li, Brodsgaard, and Jacobsen's articles, but is not directly addressed. Dirlik is correct in recognizing Marxism's role, but this paper argues Marxism is not a lingering piece of history soon to be forgotten, but an active participant in Chinese politics and the course of modernization.

Similar to Nick Knight's assessment that Mao's sinification of Marxism was based on distinguishing between the particular and the universal laws,¹⁸ separating the particular of

¹⁵ Xin Li, Kjeld Erik Brodsgaard, and Michael Jacobsen, Redefining Beijing Consensus: ten economic principles," *China Economic Journal* 2.3 (Nov 2009): 301-308.

¹⁶ Kennedy, 467.

¹⁷ Dirlik, "Beijing," 2.

¹⁸ Nick Knight, "Mao Zedong's 'Sinification of Marxism,' 1985," in *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents*, edited by Timothy Cheek (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002):197-204.

economic initiatives from the universal of overarching modernization theory reveals that China's development has more in common with its socialist legacy than it does with the Washington Consensus. To remove Marxism from the discussion of China's development is to ignore a large segment of the modernization process in China. Like the Soviet Model before it, Chinese modernization advocated a dialectical approach to policy and relied on a planned economy, but also placed the benefit of the common person in higher regard and emphasized more strongly the need to legitimize the government than in the Soviet Union. Additionally, Deng Xiaoping and Reform and Opening acknowledged the need for capitalist development, a central element in Marx's assessment of the communist development road. Consequently, this paper contends that to assume China's development is not socialist in nature is to misunderstand the process altogether.

The Origins of Chinese Marxism

Before examining Marxism's current role in China, one must first understand how it spread in China. Due to its disjointed, indirect introduction and also the fact that it faced ideological and political competition, Marxism and its supporters had to be relatively more accommodating of differing interpretations than in other countries. While some see this as a betrayal of Marxism, it was the original break from dogmatism that allowed China the success denied to other communist countries.¹⁹

The first factor affecting Marxism's development was textual availability. A segment of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* was translated into Chinese in 1905, but by 1919,

¹⁹ While the CCP and Mao in particular would become highly dogmatic in its ideology, especially during the Cultural Revolution, Mao demonstrated a great deal of ideological pragmatism in interpreting Marxism that broke with the Soviet-tinged dogmatism demonstrated by many educated in Soviet schools.

Maurice Meisner notes that subsequent translations only included the first chapter of *The Communist Manifesto*, the second chapter of Engels's *The Origins of Family, Private Property, and the State*, and Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. When Peking University History Professor Li Dazhao wrote his famous 1919 essay, "My Marxist Views," he had to draw from Japanese translations of the preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, and *Capital*. Meisner notes that the limited glimpse into Marxist discourse gave it the perception of a radical, violent theory that "presupposed the existence of capitalist economic relations and a well-developed urban proletariat. In the absence of these conditions Marxism could not yet serve as a guide to meaningful political action."²⁰ In 1917, Chen Duxiu, one of the earliest adopters of Marxism and a major influence on Mao Zedong, replied to a reader's question that Marxism did not receive much attention in debates because China's economy and society were too underdeveloped for its brand of socialism.²¹

Secondly and more significantly, Marxism was not the only socialism being discussed in China. Various socialisms were active before the fall of the Qing Dynasty. The pro-monarchist reformer Kang Youwei in 1902 wrote the *Book of Great Community* advocating a homegrown utopian ideal inspired by Confucius's notion of the Great Community and supplemented by the European writers Etienne Cabet, John Fryer, and Edward Bellamy.²² More famously, Sun Yatsen, the founding father claimed by both the Nationalist and Communist parties, was inspired by American social reforms he encountered during his education abroad and later by Henry

²⁰ Maurice Meisner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967): 52-54, 90.

²¹ *Ibid*, 55.

²² Jonathan Spence, "Visions and Violence," *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (New York: Viking Press, 1981): 32-33. This chapter provides addition overview of other key intellectuals and ideas at the fall of the Qing and the onset of the Republican Era, including Liang Qichao, Qin Lishan, and Qiu Jin.

George's land and tax reform theories.²³ Reform-oriented journals also published information on Japan's New Village movement, Christian socialism, and Fabian socialism, but it was anarchism that became the first prevalently accepted socialism.

Unlike Marxism, anarchism was readily accessible with texts from or biographies of Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Saint-Simon, and anarchist societies based in Guangzhou with connections to Paris and Tokyo were active throughout the country. Arif Dirlik's *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* marks the beginning of the Chinese anarchist movement with the establishment of the French-Chinese World Society in 1906 by Sun Yatsen's associates, Li Shizeng and Wu Zhihui. This society was inspired by Kropotkin's Mutual Aid Theory²⁴ and initiated a program to send Chinese students to Europe to study and work. Alumni of the program include Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai, despite the society's later anti-communist views. Another prominent anarchist was Shifu (Liu Sifu) who began the Conscience Society (*Xinshe*) in 1911 and the Society of Anarcho-Communist Comrades (*Wuzhengfu gongchan zhuyi tongzhi hui*) in 1914. The latter group inspired additional societies, including one run by Shifu's brother, Liu Shixin, whose members included Ou Shengbai (a former student of Kang Youwei's) and Liang Bingxian, who edited the journal *Labor (Laodong)* that later helped spread word of the October Revolution.²⁵

Another major contributing factor was an initial misunderstanding of the Bolshevik victory in the October Revolution of 1917 as an anarchist movement. Dirlik notes that warlord-

²³ Ibid, 29; Arif Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989): 20.

²⁴ The basic premise of mutual aid theory is that species only evolve when members cooperate and assist each other to achieve full potential, and argues that this is inherent in man and repressed by the state.

²⁵ Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991): 14-15, 126.

controlled media and foreign reports published in China labeled the Bolsheviks as “extremists,” which at the time was used locally to describe anarchist groups. Additionally, *Labor’s* first assessment of the revolution quoted Trotsky in such a manner that seemed to link the October Revolution to Tolstoy’s laborism. Subsequent articles in 1918 described Russia’s social goals as “‘anarcho-communism’ first, and freedom, equality, and universal love second” or “the establishment of anarchy, the abolition of private property and religion, and the termination of [World War One].”²⁶ By 1919, though, further communication and interaction with the USSR made it apparent that the Bolsheviks were not anarchists.²⁷

Interest in the Bolshevik victory led to a growing stream of translated Marxist texts to allow for more widespread access to Marxist theory. Alexander Pantsov identifies the journal *Liberation and Reconstruction’s* (*Jiefang yu gaizao*) September, 1 1919 translation of Lenin’s 1917 article “Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat” as the first translation of Lenin’s writings into Chinese. Trotsky’s articles would also feature prominently until 1922, when “more than thirty of his writings appeared in Chinese” most of which were written after 1917 and thus focused on the idea of permanent revolution,²⁸ which through Mao would become a prominent theme in Chinese politics. Marx and Engels would also have additional texts translated, but many major texts would remain untranslated for a few years more. Prior to 1929, additional translations included the Paris-based magazine *Youth’s* (*Shao nian*) translations of portions of *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx’s “Political Indifferentism” and Engels’s “On Authority” and the 1924 translation by the Changsha Self-Study University (founded by Mao

²⁶ Dirlik, “*Origins*,” 21, 26-27.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 30.

²⁸ Alexander Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution 1919-1927* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000): 29-31.

Zedong) of *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.²⁹ Additionally, standard translations were still being formulated during this time, only to be agreed upon in the mid-1920s, so early translations were incorrect or at least ambiguous. “For example, the term *bourgeoisie* was usually interpreted in China as *youchan jieji*, ‘a class (or strata) that possesses property’” whereas the current term is now *zichan jieji* or “‘a class (or strata) that capitalizes property.’”³⁰ This was soon to change though.

At the same time, several reformers began to take note of Marxism and communism, most notably Li Dazhao. In 1918, Li began a study group at Beijing University where he lectured using the Japanese translation of *Capital*; in 1919, he proclaimed himself a Marxist. Meisner argues that Li accepted Marxism before he truly understood it and that therefore, like many early Chinese Marxists, he “found it comparatively easy to revise and transform [Marxist] formulations to fit the needs of the Chinese situation.”³¹ He further argues Li’s populist nature and dissatisfaction with Marx’s materialist conception of history that devalued the role of ethics in social change led him to promote the idea of a rural revolution and encouraged his students, including his library assistant Mao Zedong, to go to the countryside to create socialist reform while also promoting Marx’s critique of capitalism and the idea of class struggle.³² Dirlik additionally argues that Li was still heavily influenced by Kropotkin and wanted to create a hybrid of anarchism and Marxism.³³

²⁹ *The Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in China: Catalogue and selected bibliography* [Die Werke von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in China: Katalog und auswahlbibliographie] (Trier, Germany: Karl-Marx-Haus, 1984): 124.

³⁰ Pantsov, “Bolshevik,” 31.

³¹ Meisner, “Li,” 56-57, 72.

³² Ibid, 75, 80-82, 92-93.

³³ Dirlik, “Origins,” 45, 51.

Both Meisner and Dirlik hold that Western powers ceding of German holdings in Shandong to Japan, which sparking the May 4th Movement, ignited an interest in the “radical” Marxist and Bolshevik theories, though Dirlik argues that only with the formation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and later Bolshevik influence did Marxism gain a serious foothold. The latter influence occurred to an even greater extent after Sun Yatsen signed the 1923 Sun-Joffe Pact that, while acknowledging China would not follow a strict Soviet path, allowed Soviet aid in unifying China.³⁴ This resulted in both the Nationalist and Communist Parties sending members to be educated in Russia and Soviet aid teams arriving in China to promote industrialization and eventually ideological assistance to the fledgling Communist Party. The ramifications of these developments would be widespread, including: the two United Fronts during the course of the Sino-Japanese War until 1945; the beginning of a tumultuous and ambiguous Sino-Soviet relationship strained by ideological tension; and the initial domination of CCP ideology by Bolshevik interpretations of Marxism.³⁵

However, the China-USSR alliance for the communists had an initial benefit as it led to the beginning of a textual flood in China. Between 1929 and 1936, almost all the major Marxist texts were translated into Chinese.³⁶ 1929 especially saw Li Yining and Zhou Fuhai’s translation of the entirety of *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State*; Peng Jiasehng’s collection of Engels’s *Religion, Philosophy, and Socialism*, a more authoritative *Socialism*:

³⁴ Bruce A. Elleman, "Soviet Diplomacy and the First United Front in China," *Modern China* 21.4 (1995): 450-80 argues economic ties and a desire to gain leverage with the Beijing government was the USSR’s motivations in initiating negotiations with Sun, and had nothing to do with the newly formed CCP.

³⁵ Dirlik, “*Origins*,” discusses the early Bolshevik influence on the CCP without mentioning the Sun-Joffe Manifesto.

³⁶ This paper uses Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, but this manuscript was not discovered until the early 1920s and would not receive much attention until the 1950s.

Utopian and Scientific, part of *The Dialectics of Nature*, and Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach;" Engels's "On Authority;" and Marx and Engels's "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League." Early 1930 saw the publication of two collections; in February, the *Selected Marxist Texts* included "Wage Labour and Capital," and *The Holy Family*, and March brought Pan Hongwen's *Foundations of Marxism* containing Hua Gang's translations of the 1877, 1883, and 1890 prefaces to *The Communist Manifesto* and Engels's "Principles of Communism." Later that year included the first complete translation of *Capital, Vol. 1* by Cheng Qixiu, and Wu Liping translated all of Engel's *Anti-Durhing* in November, which Mao acquired from a Zhangzhou library and carried to Yan'an. In December 1931, Guo Moruo translated all of "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" while exiled in Japan during the White Terror; and August 1932 saw the completion of Engel's *Dialectics of Nature* by Du Weizhi. In 1938, the CCP would officially take control of translation efforts by ordering the official, authoritative translation of ten Marxist texts between 1938 and 1942 by the Marxist-Leninist Institute in Yan'an,³⁷ though they would struggle to break from early Soviet and anarchist influences. However, it would be incorrect to assume that the CCP was wholly dependent on the USSR for their understanding of Marxism when so much of the Marxist canon was available in Chinese. Additionally, the disconnect between Soviet teachings and rural warfare resulted in an ideological struggle between a pragmatic Mao Zedong and the dogmatic Li Lisan.

Despite the eventual break with Soviet dogma, the initial influence of Soviet interpretations and anarchism remained vital in shaping Chinese Marxism. Mutual Aid Theory, the concept of the peasants as a revolutionary force, and Mao's breaks from Soviet ideology

³⁷ Pantsov, "Bolshevik," 31; *The Works* 124-128. Between 1930-1936, there were four major translations of *Capital*. Which one is most authoritative, or which Mao read is unknown.

contributed to later developments, such as the campaign to collectivize rural land, the Great Leap Forward,³⁸ and the Cultural Revolution. More subtly though, they laid the groundwork for three enduring political traditions that have extended beyond the Reform Era into contemporary politics. This only becomes evident though by returning to these formative years for the CCP's formation.

China's Marxist Trends

The decision to begin the analysis of China's modernization in the 1980s with Deng Xiaoping's rise to power is the common denominator of large segments of the modernization theory literature. There is a logic to that decision, as Reform and Opening immediately preceded the GDP boom of the 1990s, but that is not when China's modernization process actually began. The entire twentieth century saw the rapid dissemination and evolution of Western science, philosophy, and culture in China, that even before 1979 Deng Xiaoping and his contemporaries had a crucial part in shaping. Moreover, the economy in 1980 was not the same economy as in 1949 or even 1952 with GDP having already increased almost seven-fold to 458.7 billion RMB,³⁹ and so this thirty-year span needs to be accounted for since it is the foundation Reform and Opening built upon. With this starting point and by examining the speeches and government papers published on modernization efforts, three Marxist themes become evident: (1) the Soviet

³⁸ 1958-1961, Following the last step of land reform and redistribution of organizing peasants into large collectives, Mao and the CCP implemented a plan to simultaneously develop agriculture and heavy industry. Due to the combination of poor industrial and agricultural practices, administrative communication breakdowns, and disastrous weather, millions of people starved to death. For additional information, see Roderick MacFarquhar. *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 2. London: Published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the East Asian Institute of Columbia University, and the Research Institute on Communist Affairs of Columbia University by Oxford University Press, 1974-1997 or Frank Dikotter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962* (New York: Walter & Co., 2010).

³⁹ "China Data Center-University of Michigan.

economic and political models, (2) application of Mao's dialectics, and (3) Marxian democratic⁴⁰ tendencies.

(1) The Soviet Legacy

Kong Hanbing describes the Soviet Model as a “combination of the theory envisioned by Marx of an economy without commodity or market relations and of the Bolshevik practice of ‘War Communism’ (1918-1920),” that in practice emphasized public ownership, implemented a command economy, and emphasized heavy industry to such an extent that it neglected agricultural and light industry development.⁴¹ He argues that this model was an effective development plan for economically undeveloped, possibly war-torn countries, with a centralized government that wanted to modernize quickly, making it an even better model for China than the USSR.⁴² The PRC's long-standing alliance with the USSR and the initial success of Soviet-style policies through the 1950s cemented the model as China's modernizing guide star that would continue even after de-Stalinization in the USSR. Only after the excesses of Mao's leadership exaggerated the potential weaknesses in the model, resulting in the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, did the Party revise the model to a partial market economy.⁴³

However, the extent of its success in the 1950s accounts for the Soviet Model's continued influence on the economy. In the style of the USSR, economic modernization efforts began with the formation of the first Five-Year Plan (1953-1957). It called for the construction of 156

⁴⁰ Democratic in this instance refers to a concern for people, their well-being, or development, and not to a form of government characterized by free elections and representation. This is discussed later in the paper.

⁴¹ Hanbing Kong, “The Transplantation and Entrenchment of the Soviet Economic Model in China,” *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present*, edited by Thomas P. Bernstein and Hua-Yu Li (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010): 153-154.

⁴² Ibid, 154-155.

⁴³ Ibid, 161-164.

industrial and infrastructure projects with the Soviet government agreeing to assist with 141 projects in 1954. By the end of the Five Year Plan, over 100 heavy-industry factories in diverse manufacturing and energy fields had been built. As Kong writes, “These achievements were very exciting. They moved the people of China. Because of them, China changed its image of being poor and weak. The positive effects of the Soviet model were thus strikingly displayed.”⁴⁴

Concurrently, the countryside underwent major agricultural reform through collectivization. Although the collectivization movement is overshadowed by the ultimate failure of the Great Leap Forward and its role in furthering an urban-rural divide, in the early and mid-1950s, many peasants willingly participated in collectivization recommendations because of the initial positive results. Li Huaiyin’s *Village China Under Socialism and Reform* examines land reform in Qindong District and peasant participation and resistance trends. He finds that although there was some hesitancy in making each new reform, peasants were generally satisfied or even enthusiastic about land redistribution, mutual aid teams, and the cooperatives stages. These stages saw the poor peasants, constituting 53% of the population, increase its share of land ownership from 10.24% to 55.8%; the government introduce better farming techniques and heartier crops; and the introduction of more efficient labor due to the opening of more land by removing property divisions, providing access to tools, and improved division of labor.⁴⁵ Li notes that in other counties that were already prosperous, such as Songjiang, collectivization had no benefits and even resulted in decreased productivity at times.⁴⁶ But for many farmers, collectivization up to the co-op level was beneficial.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 161.

⁴⁵ Huaiyin Li, *Village China Under Socialism and Reform*, (Stanford University Press: 2009):16, 18, 25-26, 36-28.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 27-28. Reasons why collectivization ultimately failed is part of the democracy section to follow.

Together, these two initiatives brought the promised successes and gained the Party a surplus of legitimization that they would draw on in later years when things fell apart. Mao would abuse the principles of the Soviet Model to irrational extremes in the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, leading to immeasurable social and political strife. However, from an economic standpoint, the Mao era saw net growth and significant increases in living standards so that the 1980s' reforms were able to explode forward from a "solid technological basis."⁴⁷ Consequently, Deng only had to revise the Model and reverse the degree to which it was applied, but not abandon it completely.

The 1980s saw a high level of reform toward a market economy. It saw the creation of the SEZs for relatively free capitalist innovation, the promotion of privately owned businesses, the establishment of the stock market, and the acceptance of merit-based employment in lieu of the "iron rice bowls," or life-long employment contracts. However, the state continued, and still continues, to play a significant role in the economy. SOEs have a large presence in major industries, the government regularly bails out the stock market and key industries in times of crisis, and the government promotes trade protectionism and artificially low currency exchange rates against the principles of a free market economy.

Deng justified this partial transformation by arguing that a successful balance between capitalism and socialism would avoid economic inequality. "Capitalism can only enrich less than 10 per cent of the Chinese population; it can never enrich the remaining 90 per cent. But if we adhere to socialism and apply the principle of distribution to each according to his work, there

⁴⁷ Li, 7.

will not be excessive disparities in wealth.”⁴⁸ Whether it is too much capitalism or an inevitable part of developing a country as large and diverse as China, development has been highly unequal between provinces and even between urban and rural communities of the same province. In 2008, the per capita GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) ranged from Shanghai’s 18,722 USD to Guizhou’s 1,976 USD, meaning Shanghai and Beijing (15,986 USD) were both doing better than 2007 Russia, while Guizhou was less economically successful than 2003 Vietnam or Nigeria.⁴⁹ However, these disparities should not be taken to mean that the Western provinces have failed to develop. In fact, Guizhou and Gansu, the two poorest provinces, saw compounded growth between 2005 and 2007 of 62% and 65% respectively, while Shanghai and Beijing, the two richest, saw their compounded growth of the same timespan at 55% and 44%.⁵⁰ While the actual sum of growth will be significantly larger for the eastern provinces due to their higher starting point, as China’s economy slows from the looming middle income trap,⁵¹ Guizhou and Gansu may not see their economies slow yet as they maintain their “advantage of backwardness,” and can continue to develop hard industry while Beijing and Shanghai adjust to a more service-oriented economy. Kong stated that the Soviet Model was only sufficient up to a certain level of development, and so the possibility for further revision may be needed. However, that revision may not be capitalist in nature.

⁴⁸ Deng, “Building A Socialism with Specifically Chinese Character,” *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3, (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1994): 73. All other works by Deng, unless specified, come from the same volume.

⁴⁹ Stephen Green, “If Guangdong were a country... (Part II),” Standard Chartered Bank, 27 August 2008, 2-4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 4-5.

⁵¹ This term refers to the difficulty many countries face developing beyond a middle-income level into high-income countries. Similarly, many Western countries are said to face a high income trap as economic growth slows.

The transition to a planned market economy needs to be examined in a broader ideological context. A prevailing interpretation is that Reform and Opening marked the start of abandoning socialism under the guise of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (*Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi*), but that is not the case. Though critical of capitalist development in France, England, and Germany, Karl Marx stated in *Capital* that the capitalist stage was vital for socialist development. In addition to leading to the class divide that would spark socialist revolution, it also led to several positive developments. Though he objected to child labor and the replacing of human labor with machines, he saw the potential for beneficial outcomes: mainly the requirement for children workers to attend school and the rise of technical and agricultural adult schools. While capitalists were enjoying an initial financial advantage by removing humans from the means of production and these events were creating masses of unemployed, unskilled workers, these events were also creating more skilled worker that would soon be able to out-think and out-innovate the capitalist and seize control of production.⁵²

China, like the USSR, always planned to bypass the purely capitalist phase by blending the best features of socialism and capitalism. Even as Mao and the CCP promised the establishment of a new China on the basis of socialist values and guided by Marxist ideology, “On New Democracy,” “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party,” and “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” advocated a necessary pseudo-capitalist stage, which would be a relatively long stage, as “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” concludes. Mao’s zeal tipped the balance outlined in these plans towards hasty socialist development, which Maurice Meisner argues was always Mao’s plan, though Mao’s discussion of the importance of

⁵² Karl Marx, “Capital,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978): 403, 414, 425-428, 432, 438.

the state not completely controlling business in “On the Ten Major Relationships” indicates some initial conflict on the speed with which to begin that transition into socialism. Deng therefore corrected the imbalance inherent in the Soviet Model and Mao’s application by applying a more Marxian interpretation of the capitalist phase: namely, to facilitate the transition to socialism by freeing the population from economic oppression through education and access to the means of production. Maintaining this balance between capitalist development and the socialist ideas of benefiting the people have been continued by Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping to varying degrees of success.

In 1979, after viewing the Cultural Revolution’s widespread destruction of industry and society, Deng put forward the goals of ensuring all citizens had access to basic necessities, for China’s industry to resemble the 1970s West, and for per capita GDP to increase from 200-300 USD to 1,000 USD (revised down to 800 USD in 1982), distributed fairly equally,⁵³ which represented a quadrupling of the Chinese 1979 GDP.⁵⁴ While the goal for an evenly distributed income would be minimized throughout the next several decades, the idea of a moderately prosperous society persisted throughout Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao’s administrations.

In 2002, Jiang proposed goals for the first half of the 21st century, primarily, that China would double its 2000 GDP by 2020 and by 2050 “fundamentally realize modernization, establish a strong, democratic, and cultured socialist society.”⁵⁵ Faced with rapid economic growth, growing income inequality, and realizing the environmental detriments of

⁵³ For discussion on the contradiction between this and “Some will get rich first”, see the section on economic development.

⁵⁴ Zhang Airu, “Cong “xiaokang” dao “quanmian xiaokang”-- Deng Xiaoping xiaokang shehui lilun xingcheng he fazhan shu lun,” *People’s Daily*, July 14, 2014, accessed Nov. 16, 2016, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2014/0714/c69113-25279758.html>.

⁵⁵ Zhang.

industrialization, Hu Jintao expanded the goals of a moderately prosperous society with his conceptualization of a Harmonious Society achieved through the Scientific Outlook on Development (*kexue fazhan guan*): “to seek, as a national goal, a ‘people-centered,’ ‘all-round’ approach which... ‘strives to take a civilized development path characterized by the development of production, a well-off life, and a good ecological environment.’”⁵⁶ Specifically, he called on China to keep developing its economy, society, and world presence in a peaceful manner; place the people’s interests first “to insure that development is for the people, by the people and with the people sharing in its fruits”; pursue environmentally responsible development; and balance the urban-rural divide.⁵⁷

Shortly after Xi Jinping came to power he also reaffirmed the goals of “bringing about a moderately prosperous society in all respects... by 2021, when the CPC celebrates its centenary; the goal of building China into a modern socialist country... by 2049, when the People’s Republic of China marks its centenary; and the dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will then be realized.”⁵⁸ These messages are almost rhetorically identical to Jiang and Hu’s visions for China’s development. However, some still doubt their authenticity, because, in combination with the liberalization of markets since Reform and Opening, China’s leaders rarely talk about establishing a communist society.

⁵⁶ Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *How China’s Leaders Think: The Inside Story of China’s Past, Current, and Future Leaders* (Singapore: John Wiley and Sons, 2011): 122.

⁵⁷ Kuhn, 125.

⁵⁸ Jinping Xi, “Achieving Rejuvenation is the Dream of the Chinese People,” in *The Governance of China* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press Co., Ltd., 2014): 38. Unless otherwise stated, all Xi’s writings come from this source.

However, there are barriers in establishing communism. In his report to the 17th Party Congress (2007), Hu Jintao refers to “the lofty ideal of communism,”⁵⁹ which Robert Kuhn says shows the Party’s “ultimate goal is still communism, an affluent, classless and perhaps stateless society sometime in the (far) future.”⁶⁰ Additionally, Xi has also said, “Party members, particularly Party officials, should maintain a firm belief in lofty communist ideals, along with the common ideal of building socialism with Chinese characteristics...”⁶¹ It seems then, Chinese leaders hope to one day reach a pure communist state, but will instead focus on the more attainable goal of socialism.⁶² And examining the goals of communism and their placement in today’s realities, one wonders at the possibility of ever attaining true communism. A key part of communism is the abolition of the monetary system (the market) and instead goods are accessible to all as needed. However, as communism also promotes the abolishment of the state, Marx failed to say how one would have access to goods, or how it would be ensured enough was produced for everyone. A temporary shortage in luxury goods would not be bad, but how would one monitor crop production and distribution?

Additionally, in an increasingly interconnected world, one would struggle to abolish the market and still conduct multilateral trade. Part of this comes from Marx and Engel’s belief that the global exploitation of workers would eventually lead every country to have a proletarian

⁵⁹ Hu Jintao, “Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China of Oct. 15, 2007,” *Xinhua.net*, Oct. 24, 2007, accessed December 18, 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm.

⁶⁰ Kuhn, 125.

⁶¹ Xi, “Uphold,” 25.

⁶² Socialism in this context aligns with Marx’s description of “incomplete communism” in which the state or aspects of a market economy remain in an otherwise communist society. Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978):83.

revolution and establish communism.⁶³ However, barring such widespread revolutions in the West, China would still need capital and an official head of state. Therefore, China's reluctance to put a hard date on establishing communism is not from a lack of desire but from a need to determine the realities of a communist society. This inability to give a concrete timeline for the ultimate realization of Marxism's ideal outcome does not mean that all of Marxism has been abandoned. As will be shown, the values and methodologies of this theory are still central to Chinese governance. Therefore, while China no longer follows a strict Soviet-style modernization program, the fundamental structure of the economy is part of a continuous legacy rooted in the spectrum of Marxist theory.

(2) Mao's Dialectics

In January 2016, Chen Yuan, Vice President of the CPPCC National Committee, published an article encouraging people to study five key writings from Mao, as per former Chairman of the CPC Central Advisory Commission and Vice Chairman of the CPC, Chen Yun's, recommendation. The five articles are "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," "On Practice," "On Contradiction," "On War and Strategy," and "On Protracted War." Chen Yun recommended that current generations study Mao's theory as embodied in these articles, which are "full of dialectical materialism and historical materialism philosophy, which fully illustrates that Comrade Mao Zedong is a Marxist dialectical materialist."⁶⁴ In making such a claim, Chen has waded into a complex debate about Marxist theory that reveals that most of the

⁶³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978): 476-477, 484.

⁶⁴ Yuan Chen, "Cong Mao Zedong de wupian wenzhang tanxue zhixue [Study and discuss philosophy from Mao Zedong's five articles]," CCCPC Party Literature Research Office, January 8, 2016, accessed November 2, 2016, http://www.wxyjs.org.cn/mzdsxyj_568/201601/t20160108_209239.htm.

these statements are incorrect, but his argument is ultimately not a bad one. As will be discussed, what specifically to call Marx and Mao's dialectics is complicated, but there is a clear shared philosophical tradition from Marx's second thesis in his "Theses on Feuerbach" to the methodology applied in Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook on Development initiative. The common link can be summarized by China's most enduring political tagline: Seek Truth from Facts (*shishi qiushi*).

When Mao in 1937 identified the benefits of a Marxist understanding of history and social change in "On Practice," he pointed to "its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the proletariat. The other [benefit] is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice [...] The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice."⁶⁵ By labelling this theory "dialectical materialism," Mao shows both the Soviet influence on his philosophy and a misunderstanding of dialectical materialism. Allan Megill and Jaeyoon Park explain that the term was introduced by Georgi Plekhanov in 1891 to refer to Engels's notion that nature, not just human society, acts according to the dialectic principle of contradictions resolving into unity. This idea was promoted by Lenin and Stalin,⁶⁶ and through the Soviet canon was continued by Mao. However, "On Practice" and its complementary text "On Contradiction" do not discuss the natural sphere, but remain firmly focused on human society and the formulation of policy. To this extent, Mao perhaps should have chosen a different descriptor for Marx's outlook, such as

⁶⁵ Mao Zedong, "On Practice: On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing, July 1937," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, vol. I* Foreign Language Press, 1975: 297. Mao also seems to reference Marx and Engels's conclusions in *The Communist Manifesto* and Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

⁶⁶ Megill and Park, 11. See also Zbigniew A. Jordan, *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism: A Philosophical and Sociological Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967).

materialistic conception of history” or “historical materialism,” both of which terms are used by Engels, though not by Marx.⁶⁷ However, even these terms are a matter of great debate.⁶⁸

While in some ways these terms are very similar, Megill argues that “materialist conception of history” would be a better, though still not wholly accurate description of Marx’s original views. He explains that Marx had to reconcile two competing worldviews: one rationalist, which “bears... the mark of an essentialist, analytical quasisyllogistic approach to knowledge that is ultimately rooted (via Hegel) in Aristotle’s metaphysics” and the other empirical, which “emphasizes that empirical research can and should be done” to understand the world scientifically.⁶⁹ Although these approaches compete with each other, Marx used them to also inform each other. Following the principles of dialectics, which includes the notion of what Megill calls the “progress by contradiction,” change arises from contradictions in society.⁷⁰ Marx finds that contradictions permeate all human societies up to the present. He focuses most insistently on contradictions between, on the one hand, the superstructure of society (culture, ideology, politics, etc.) together with the relations of production, and on the other hand, the force of production. The identification of the relations and forces of production as the root of contradiction stems from Marx’s own outlook,⁷¹ which Marx at one point defined as a setting right side up of Hegel’s dialectics. According to Marx, in Hegel’s thinking “the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought”

⁶⁷ Friedrich Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978): 699, 700.

⁶⁸ For a more in-depth view of the debate surrounding descriptions of Marx’s ideology than what is to follow, see Allan Megill, “The Character and Limits of Marx’s Unified Rational History of Humankind” in *Karl Marx: The Burden of Reason*, 181-234 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002).

⁶⁹ Megill, “Character,” 206.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 187.

⁷¹ Ibid, 183, 187.

meaning that the observable world influences thoughts as opposed to thoughts being objective creations that then influence the observable world, whereas Marx corrects this error.⁷² Megill, however, argues this is more a continuation of Hegel in that it keeps the idea of embedded progress (conflict from contradiction resolves to unity that then leads to new contradiction and additional change), and Marx just shifts the focus from intellectual contradiction to contradiction that arise from the sphere of material production.⁷³ Thus, while Marx engaged with a materialistic outlook of history and applied dialectics (the notion of progress by contradiction) in his critique of existing economic and social order, to say that Marx engaged in dialectical materialism or historical materialism is to apply inaccurate terminology to his philosophy.⁷⁴

However, Mao labelling Marx incorrectly does not undermine the accuracy of the substance of his articles. As will be shown, Mao understood dialectics and engaged with certain tenets of materialism that bear a strong resemblance to Marx's writings. This paper will address this segment of Mao Zedong Thought though, but I will refer to it not as Mao's materialism, but as Mao's dialectics because Mao deviated from Marx's materialism by allowing ideological contradiction a role in shaping society. This is not meant to minimize the prominent role materialism continues to play in policy making, but serves as an umbrella term for Mao's attempt to meld these two outlooks.

The Marxian inspiration for Mao's dialectics begins with Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach." The second thesis reads, in part, "Man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice," while the beginning of the third thesis states, "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore,

⁷² Marx, "Capital," 301.

⁷³ Megill, "Character," 183.

⁷⁴ This is expounded on in greater detail in Megill and Park.

changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringings, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that it is essential to educate the educator himself.”⁷⁵ These theses are the foundations of materialism and state first that ideas must be tested in the real world to be proven true, and that humans are the product of their circumstances, and in order to change circumstances, society must be aware of what those conditions are. These principles were present throughout Marx’s works and he took care to show what conditions were and how ideas interacted with them to highlight the contradictions that would arise before putting forward ideas to resolve the situation.

This dialectical approach is seen throughout his and Engels’s body of work, but is most clearly shown in the opening of “Estranged Labour” in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (EPM) that predates “Theses on Feuerbach” by a year. Marx writes, “We have proceeded from the premises of political economy. We have accepted its language and its laws. We presupposed private property, the separation of labour, capital and land and of wages, profit of capital and rent of land [... and] we have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity....”⁷⁶ Before he proposes his theories for future development, he defines and examines the nature of political economy to reveal the concrete world, identifies the source of tension, and only then proceeds to consider solutions. The importance of this method is not just to show the veracity of his analysis, but to allow for widespread application of the ideas. He and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* during the discussion of the necessary steps of the bourgeois-democratic revolution that “these measures will of course be different in different countries,” and qualified those steps with the statement that they were for “the most advanced

⁷⁵ Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978): 144.

⁷⁶ Marx, “Economic,” 70.

countries.”⁷⁷ Concrete conditions would vary between individual countries due to their individual structures, tensions, and stage of political-economic development. The openings of *Capital* and the *EPM* therefore gain additional importance by establishing what the conditions of the most advanced countries are so other states know how to proceed or adjust as necessary, as Mao would do throughout his early writings.

Engels would consolidate this in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, where he argues the materialist conception of history involved the acceptance of three truths: first, observation is the key to understanding the world; second, access to the means of production is the basis for society; and third, “*contradiction... contains the germ of the whole of the social antagonisms of today.*”⁷⁸ He then proceeds to demonstrate successful application of these principles to Marx’s analysis of political economy and society to further prove the inevitability of socialist formation and the proletarian revolution. Being one of the first Marxist works available in Chinese, it makes sense that the language of Mao’s early quote from “On Practice” would more closely resemble Engels’s than Marx’s but the ideas are still Marxian.

Mao would especially draw on the concepts of the second thesis in “On Practice” and “On Contradiction.” In “On Practice,” Mao argued Marx’s case that ideas were only accurate if they functioned well in the real world. He went so far as to apply this not just to an understanding of history, but to policy formulation. As he concludes, “Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective

⁷⁷ Marx and Engels, “Manifesto,” 490.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 704. Emphasis in the original.

world.”⁷⁹ In more popular terms, one should seek truth from observable facts, devise a plan, act upon them, and finally revise those actions as the circumstances demand. He then follows this up with “On Contradiction” to help guide one’s observations and practice.

In studying concrete conditions for the formation of theory, one should look for opposing ideological or societal forces causing conflict amongst a group, which for Engels and eventually Mao was always class conflict. While echoing Engel’s assertion that contradictions were the root of all tension and historical development, Mao encouraged one to look for such tensions in all aspects of society including ideological, educational, and ethnic conflicts, though they all had roots in creating class division. However, to understand the true nature of opposing forces, one must study facts and not rely on generalizations because two like contradictions can have opposite outcomes due to their historic conditions. Additionally, one must consider both sides as rational, independent actors and clearly understand each perspective before deciding how to resolve the contradiction.⁸⁰

Mao later updated his position in “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People” in 1957. The main philosophical contribution is the idea of “unity-criticism-unity” that holds that if everyone proceeds from a desire for unity, then ideological debate and critique will result in further societal unity.⁸¹ The goal is to encourage an atmosphere of lively debate so that contradictions among individuals can be resolved peacefully before they become antagonistic. While he does not go so far as to say a consensus will be immediately reached, he seems to suggest that with time, any sufficiently revolutionary person will accept the values of Marxism.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 308.

⁸⁰ Mao, “On Contradiction, August 1937,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, vol.1* Foreign Language Press, 1975: 311-347.

⁸¹ Mao, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People, February 27, 1957,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, vol.1* Foreign Language Press, 1975: 389-390.

This echoes what Megill refers to as “Marx’s ‘unitarism,’” or his “insistence that contradictions resolve into some sort of higher unity, rather than remaining unresolved.”⁸²

The majority of Mao’s writings would apply the principles of his dialectics to policymaking and, as will be argued later, would positively contribute to the success of the Party. However, there were also improper attempts to apply this methodology that resulted in disaster. This was hinted at in what has been labeled Mao’s first Marxist writing, “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan,” from March 1927. Mao praised the peasants for organizing to overthrow the landlords, reject traditional culture, and reeducate the opposition through means of mass criticisms, humiliation, and imprisonment or execution. He would temper this rhetoric in favor of gradual education and lively debate, but when the Hundred Flower’s Campaign failed, he would return to them again in the Anti-Rightist Movement and then the Cultural Revolution.

Though there is debate on Mao’s actual intentions in launching the Hundred Flower’s Campaign,⁸³ the campaign was announced in February 1957 as an opportunity for the people, and especially intellectuals, to debate ideas for continued development and criticize the Party. The program embodied the ideals of dialectical materialism by encouraging the airing and resolution of remaining ideological tensions that would then be resolved by the strongest, clearest argument, which Mao assumed would naturally be Marxist ideals. However, the Party instead received demands for democratization, especially freedom of expression, and Mao ended

⁸² Allan Megill, “Revised: Chapter 3: Why Marx Excluded Private Property and the Market from the Future Socialist Society,” originally from *Karl Marx: the burden of reason* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 2002): 9 (document prepared for the forthcoming Chinese edition of this work, which is a condensed version of the original).

⁸³ Meisner, *Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007): 130-139.

the campaign by outlining in a revised version of “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Amongst the People” what correct ideas should be held, while scholars who gave criticism were punished with imprisonment or hard labor.

Mao’s dialectics was meant to overcome dogma, but in its application, Mao was entirely dogmatic. Improper, Western ideas of individual freedom or side effects of previous class structures and not severe Party censorship or bad policy were the only causes of societal disunity. Failing to recognize all opposing forces, Mao therefore failed to properly revise his methods and instead increased the factors that created divisions, such as inherited class background registrations or a kind of reverse McCarthyism that resulted in anti-communist witch-hunts. Only when this failed application of dialectics hit its zenith through the ten years of the Cultural Revolution that only ended with Mao’s death could the course be corrected.

While scholars such as Maurice Meisner have additionally criticized Mao’s theories as both unoriginal and mere lip service to Marxist doctrine, the Party continues to apply these ideas to reform and development. Beyond the single statement, “‘Uphold truth and rectify error’—this is the basic stand of dialectical materialism our Party must take,” in the “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China,” other references to dialectics or materialism have largely disappeared from Party discourse. This is likely due to its overtly ideological associations, to be replaced with the phrases “Seek Truth from Facts” or the general, all-encompassing “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

For many Western academics and especially the media, Deng Xiaoping has one great accomplishment: the beginning of China’s market economy under Reform and Opening. While also of great importance to China, Deng’s other principle legacy is the establishing of socialism

with Chinese characteristics, also known as Deng Xiaoping Theory.⁸⁴ At the 12th CCP National Congress, he announced, “We must integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete realities of China, blaze a path of our own and build a socialism with Chinese characteristics.”⁸⁵ While this is closely associated with such concepts as the One Center and Two Basic Points,⁸⁶ China being in the primary stage of socialism, and the need for economic development with a socialist market economy, at its core, the idea of socialism, or Marxism, with any nation’s characteristics is just a rebranding of Mao’s dialectics and Marx’s materialist approaches. Deng, as an original revolutionary, would be well aware of this, but the change in term marked the subtle shift from Mao’s breakneck pace of achieving communism to a slower transition through the various stages of socialism and a new recognition of the vital need for economic growth in a capitalist stage.

The second most overt example of the continued relevance of Mao’s dialectics is the methodology set by Hu Jintao as part of the Scientific Outlook of Development and the official transformation of the CCP from revolutionary to governing party. Timothy Heath of the RAND Corporation explains that these two decisions shifted Party focus from a dogged pursuit of economic development to a concern with total societal and national development and spurred a push for institutionalization. What is most interesting, though, is his description of the CCP central directive formation process. In a “loop of analysis,” one crafts a theory in consultation

⁸⁴ Thesis Group of the Marxism Research Institute, *Marxist Studies in China, 2008-2009*. (Beijing: China Translation and Publishing Corporation, 2009):79, 87.

⁸⁵ Deng, “Opening Speech at the Twelfth National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” 14.

⁸⁶ Shufa Liang, “Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi zongti buju yanbian de luoji yu yiyi (The Logic and Significance of the Evolution of the Layout of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics),” *Makesi zhuyi yanjiu (Studies on Marxism)* (2014): 36-37. In Chinese, it is *erwei, yiben* and refers to the central goal of pursuing socialism with Chinese characteristics while pursuing the simultaneous growth of the market economy and political awareness.

with key experts, issues a basic directive or plan to key players for indoctrination and preparatory purposes, fully implements the program, and then analyzes the results, going back to the theory stage for needed revision.⁸⁷ These descriptions echo Mao's description of Marxism's characteristics in "On Practice." First, it institutionalizes the process of "practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge" by prescribing specific steps, assigning them to different bureaus and experts.⁸⁸ Second, the pivot to a more holistic, people-centered vision away from an over emphasis on economic growth and especially its goal of closing the rural-urban divide, is a modern update of Engels and Mao's emphasis that all contradiction should and will resolve in favor of the proletariat. This is additionally seen throughout in smaller discussions and plans, but the rationale for this fundamentally Marxist idea lasting so long is that it confronts two common governance challenges.

(1) Rationalization of Policy

The first principal benefit of carefully following Mao's dialectics, especially the methodology established by Hu Jintao, is its rationality. Removed from its defense of a proletariat revolution, it acts to overcome natural human bias. Instead of focusing on strengths and weaknesses, one directly asks what is perpetuating or fueling weaknesses. For instance, China is facing a nationalism crisis. Applying Mao's dialectics, one would first ask what facet of nationalism was problematic. Identifying the anti-Japanese sentiment that accompanies a part of this nationalism, one would then devise a theory to resolve the contradiction. Finally, after implementing the solution, one must assess the impact, and if the results were less than satisfactory, whether it's an economic downturn or a continuation of previous conditions, one

⁸⁷ Heath, Timothy R. "The CCP's New Governing Party Paradigm and the Central Directive Process." Talk at the University of Virginia. August 18, 2015.

⁸⁸ Mao, "On Practice," 308.

must try another theory. A predominant Western political theory, Public Choice Theory, “assumes that people are guided chiefly by their own self-interests and [...that...] bureaucrats strive to advance their own careers; and politicians seek election or reelection to office” to assert that politicians will only support policy that benefits them either directly or by winning votes.⁸⁹ The Scientific Outlook of Development attempts to overcome that by placing empirical observation and facts over ideology and the self-interest of leaders. This brings us to the second, related purpose.

(2) Reject Dogma

While Marx and Engels used dialectics and a materialist conception of history to break down blind faith in laissez faire economics and the permanence of the capitalist system, Mao initially wielded it to oppose dogmatic adherence to any ideology. While Li Lisan and other Party leaders wanted to mobilize the proletariat and adhere to an even stricter Soviet model, Mao argued for a peasant revolution both against traditional Marxism, and in complete alignment with Marx’s methodology. This was an early theme in Mao’s writings that first appeared in 1930 in “Oppose Book Worship.” He writes:

When we say Marxism is correct, it is certainly not because Marx was a “prophet” but because his theory has been proved correct in our practice and in our struggle. We need Marxism in our struggle. In our acceptance of his theory no such formalization of mystical notion as that of “prophecy” ever enters our minds. ... Of course we should study Marxist books, but this study must be integrated with our country’s actual conditions.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ William F. Shughart, “Public Choice,” *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, Library of Economics and Liberty. Accessed Oct. 10, 2016.
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/PublicChoice.html>.

⁹⁰ Mao Zedong, “Oppose Book Worship,” *On Practice and Contradiction*, edited by Slavoj Zizek, London: Verso, 2007: 45.

These theories were a good starting point for investigation, but they had to be altered where national conditions contradicted theory. Similarly, faced with the paralyzing grip later Mao Zedong Thought continued to have after the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping would advocate for similar practices for Reform and Opening Up. Additionally, he cited an avoidance of Soviet dogma as the crux of China's successful socialist development and advocate that "Communists in any country should decide for themselves what road to take for revolution, because people in other countries are not familiar with the circumstances there."⁹¹ While in these two cases, this was applied to Marxist dogmatism, it is applicable to any other kind of dogmatism or blind adherence to ideology that practice suggests does not work.

(3) Democratic Interests

The Soviet Model and Mao's dialectics were meant to spur the establishment of communism, but if communism is no longer a realistic goal, what are their remaining benefits? The answer is simple: they are meant to improve the lives of the people. The extent to which the Chinese Communist Party serves the people is marred by human rights atrocities and tragedy. The Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolutions saw the death of millions, the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident was a bloody reversal of democratization efforts, and the household registration system (*hukou*), draconian family planning policies, and limitations on the freedom of association and speech call into question how the CCP could be considered at all democratic. These are all necessary criticisms that should be addressed, but the CCP is also not entirely despotic. This is because it holds communism as an ideal.

While communism is strongly associated in the West with the calls to abolish the state and redistribute wealth and property, that was not the main feature of a truly communist society.

⁹¹ Deng, "We are building a socialist society with high standards," 37.

Marx's first description of communist society in the *EPM* is the “*positive* expression of annulled private property,” where things would lose their status symbol and instead would merely be possessions indicating interests or preference.⁹² In contrast, the erroneous association is actually “crude communism” where “the category of *labourer* is not done away with, but extended to all men.”⁹³ Crude communism was the lowering of society to the lowest common denominator while true communism would see everyone freed from subsistence-level existences where work would be for the betterment of humanity and the satisfaction of the human spirit.

In *Capital*, for instance, Marx affirms that skilled, social, innovative labor that fulfills the worker's needs beyond simple sustenance is vital to human nature. He sees the past, devoid of mass manufacturing and extreme separation of labor, as a more positive situation that was rapidly corrupted by the rising influence of the capitalist, but then proclaims that this will serve as the catalyst for a labor revolution that will produce a better, more innovative society as workers are freed from rote production, increase their technical prowess, and have more free (or un-employed) time. Marx sees a future occurring soon when more people are like “the watchmaker Watt (who) invented the steam-engine, the barber Arkwright, the throstle⁹⁴, and the working-jeweller, Fulton, the steam-ship.”⁹⁵ Marx is not opposed to hard work and labor, but there needs to be an intellectual, even cross-disciplinary, element to it. This is not a society of labor camps and state-mandated quotas, but one built on innovation, community, and everyone having access to the means of production.

⁹² Marx, “Economic,” 84. Emphasis in text.

⁹³ Ibid, 82. Emphasis in text.

⁹⁴ A machine used for spinning wool or cotton into thread or yarn.

⁹⁵ Marx, “Capital” 403, 414.

While the Chinese pursuit of communism throughout the Mao era as a whole resembled crude communism, there was a strong democratic theme in line with Marx's principles. Although in Marx and Engel's texts, the proletariat refers to the urban working class, Mao interpreted the essence of the proletariat as the oppressed forces, and used the term more abstractly in his early writings. In "The Chinese Party and the Chinese Revolution," Mao defines the proletariat and the peasantry. The proletariat was officially defined as industrial workers, artisans and shopkeepers, farm laborers "and other propertyless people in the cities and the countryside," which includes a large number of bankrupt peasants, while the peasant class was made up of those who own and work the land.⁹⁶ China now had both an urban and rural proletariat with significantly higher numbers than a strict interpretation would provide, but Mao went even further. He labeled the peasantry and any member of the national bourgeoisie, defined as anyone opposing Japanese imperialism, including large swaths of the Nationalist Party, as allies of the proletariat who could all eventually become communist if they adopted a proletarian mindset through study.⁹⁷ Not only was this good propaganda during a civil war, but also demonstrated a desire to improve the lives of the largest number of Chinese people regardless of partisanship or class background. Class warfare in the anti-rightist campaigns and the Cultural Revolution undermined this message, but times in which these values were in practice coincided with economic booms.

Land reform and collectivization is a prime small-scale example. In the first stages, the Party demonstrated democratic values by ensuring reforms addressed the needs of the peasantry, providing leadership with minimal levels of coercion, and ensured peasant leadership contributed

⁹⁶ Mao Zedong, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, December 1939," *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 2, Foreign Language Press, 1975: 324.

⁹⁷ Mao, "The Chinese Revolution," 325.

to the success of the co-ops.⁹⁸ However, this shift to collectives and the implementation of the Great Leap Forward ignored these democratic practices and failed. In addition to people no longer feeling they had a stake in the success of the collective due to its size, an ineffective point system, and the incorrect abolition of private property, there was also a breakdown in communication between the Party and the people. Li Huaiyin quotes a Central Committee report that “Many of them [grassroots cadres] believed that the peasants have become members of the socialist collectives and everything has become easy to do and easy to promote. ... They consciously or unconsciously give up patient persuasion and education, and substitute them with simple administrative orders.”⁹⁹ In fact, a significant portion of the Great Leap Forward recovery came from a return to primary co-ops and involving the peasants in issues of governance whether by allowing them to review ledgers or allowing them to write government offices about corrupt cadres.¹⁰⁰

On a larger scale, there is the contrast between the focus on improved living conditions espoused in Mao’s early texts and the class warfare of the Cultural Revolution. Mao and the Gang of Four abandoned the democratic ideal for ideological zeal and ambition. This time would be denounced as anti-socialist and not in line with the early texts comprising Mao Zedong Thought in the “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China,”¹⁰¹ adopted by the Sixth Plenary of the Eleventh Central

⁹⁸ Li’s discussion of Songjiang province, as well as Andrew G. Walder’s *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* and especially Frank Dikotter’s *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-57* detail the local exceptions to this assessment.

⁹⁹ Li, 45.

¹⁰⁰ Li, 104, 107.

¹⁰¹ Political Bureau of the Central Committee, “Resolution on certain questions in the history of our party since the founding of the People’s Republic of China,” on *Marxist Internet Archive*, accessed Feb. 20, 2017. <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/history/01.htm>.

Committee in 1981. Additionally, Deng stated, contrary to the emphasis on ideological purity, the government should in the first stages of socialism “develop the productive forces and gradually eliminate poverty, constantly raising the people’s living standards.”¹⁰² This would be the rallying call of the four post-Mao leaders.

From Deng Xiaoping’s calls for a moderately prosperous society in all respects (*quanmian xiaokang*) to Xi Jinping’s China Dream, the four post-Mao leaders would strive to balance economic development with the good of the people. In addition to increasing GDP to 800 USD, Deng’s standard for province-level modernization included:

1. All people had access to food and basic commodities, having moved beyond a subsistence living
2. No housing shortages
3. Towns and cities having full employment
4. No rural migration to the city due to discontent
5. All children having access to primary and secondary education, and the province having means to fund other educational, cultural, or civic projects
6. Decreased crime rates and other standards indicated a high rate of civic morality¹⁰³

Until Hu Jintao refocused modernization efforts to consider holistic development with the concept of the Harmonious Society, these goals were eclipsed by an emphasis on economic growth, but not because the Party as a whole did not value these things, but because these six criteria require capital to achieve. However, the message for increased democracy in line with the common Chinese usage of the word in which the government acts in the collective society’s best interest would be reiterated through ideological pronouncements.¹⁰⁴ Deng Xiaoping announced the Four Cardinal Principles (*sixiang jiben yuanze*) that included adhering to the people’s democratic dictatorship and Jiang Zemin spoke of the Three Represents (*sange daibiao*)

¹⁰² Deng, “We Shall Concentrate on Economic Development” 21.

¹⁰³ Deng, “Remarks After an Inspection Tour of Jiangsu Province and Other Places,” 34-35.

¹⁰⁴ As discussed by Ngeow Chow Bing, “Discourses on Chinese-style Democracy in China,” *China: An International Journal* 12.3 (Dec 2014): 94-114.

and the idea of representing the “overwhelming majority of the Chinese people”; and the more people-centric focus of the Scientific Outlook for Development.¹⁰⁵

Though Xi Jinping has focused more on national rejuvenation in the China Dream, he has endorsed the continued pursuit of Hu Jintao’s Harmonious Society as part of the initiative. Additionally, he described his role as General Secretary by saying, “As the people have given me this job, I must always keep them in the highest place in my heart, bearing in mind their deep trust and the heavy responsibilities they have placed on me.”¹⁰⁶ As this quote shows, even though he was not directly elected by the people, he still views his role as acting in service to the people and his power coming from the people’s approval. Additionally, in describing the traits of good officials, after taking a firm stance on their ideals and convictions, willingness to serve the people is listed as the most important characteristic.¹⁰⁷ While the Chinese government could do a better job between bridging the gap between rhetoric and action, there has been movement in that direction.

For instance, when Deng created the Central Advisory Committee, he intended to not only encourage an early retirement age for Party members, but also to help ensure the Central Committee remained in touch with the people by “[choosing] a grass-roots unit such as a factory, a school, a scientific research institution, a prefectural or county Party committee or even a village Party branch in the countryside and try to find out how things are there.”¹⁰⁸ The people may not be able to vote on policy measures, but this would be a way for the government to connect with the needs of the masses and ensure that enacted legislation is indeed beneficial. In a

¹⁰⁵ Xi, 8, 19-20, footnotes 7, 10, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Xi, 458.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 459.

¹⁰⁸ Deng, “Speech at the First Plenary Session of the Central Advisory Commission of the Communist Party of China (September 13, 1982),” 18-19.

more modern way, Wang Shuo notes that many Party members have begun tracking public opinion on Weibo, the Chinese Twitter, to guide their actions, because though they do not need to worry about reelection, they do want to have the people's favor and support to maintain peace and stability.¹⁰⁹

Additionally, the 1980s and 1990s saw increased power in the people's congresses. Ming Xia's 2000 article, "Political Contestation and the Emergence of the Provincial People's Congresses as Power Players in Chinese Politics: a network explanation," explains that these state institutions with elected individuals have gained sufficient power and respect to challenge or influence Party decisions. Moreover, the People's Congresses operate as the main source of government contact with the people by taking up causes otherwise ignored by other branches. Xia outlines a number of times these congresses have pursued "legislative activism in supervising the judicial branch."¹¹⁰ These are not the democratization efforts desired by Western leaders and political dissidents, but they do demonstrate an increased role and outlet for the people's will in Chinese politics. However, the decline in civil service applications and wave of resignations due to the anti-corruption campaign raises doubts about how many government works took their democratic responsibilities seriously, though it could also speak to the severe financial costs associated with a low government salary.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Shuo Wang and Susan Shirk, "The Media," In *Debating China*, edited by Nina Hachigian (Oxford University Press, 2014): 72-73.

¹¹⁰ Ming Xia, "Political Contestation and the Emergence of the Provincial People's Congresses as Power Players in Chinese Politics: a network explanation," *Journal of Contemporary China* 9.24 (2000): 204.

¹¹¹ "Civil Servants: Who wants to be a mandarin?" *The Economist*, June 6, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21653669-public-service-less-fun-if-you-cant-take-bribes-who-wants-be-mandarin>.

Scholars and politicians have discussed how China can continue its democratization efforts. Many desire multi-party elections and a more immediate implementation of rule of law, government transparency, and freedom of speech. However, others such as Daniel Bell and Brantly Womack have also theorized alternative paths that could achieve similar goals without multi-party elections that are more consistent with the Party's current actions. Bell argues that the CCP, like Singapore, represents a fledgling meritocracy that could solidify into a superior form of government by increasing the consciousness of its civil servants through teaching Confucian values, providing effective institutions for the people to highlight corruption or flaws, and adhering to rule of law.¹¹² More conventionally, Womack has put forward an alternative to multiparty democracy in the form of "party-state democracy."¹¹³ Though he questions the degree of feasibility, he considers the possibility of the CCP maintaining power while opening itself to other principles of democracy, namely participation from the people, acting in the interests of a majority, and committing itself to not revoking political rights in times of ideological crisis.¹¹⁴ This is what the Party has attempted to do, and Womack seems to conclude that if the Party meets a few key criteria, commits itself to rule of law especially, that this could be a feasible model not without merit. The specific form continued democratization takes is something only the future can show. What is certain at this moment though, is that the current government does not share the Western ideal of a small, multi-party government and is instead working to achieve as close to a communist society as reality will allow.

¹¹² Daniel Bell, *The China Model* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015): 111.

¹¹³ Brantly Womack, "Democracy and the Governing Party: A Theoretical Perspective" *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 10.1 (2005): 25.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 37-39.

The Implications

Xi Jinping's promotion to General Secretary and President meant the rise of the New Left faction to power. The political suppression following Tiananmen Square led to fervent discussions on the role of the market, the nature of modernity, and the role of the government. In addition to a shift away from socialism and increased nationalism,¹¹⁵ two prominent ideologies emerged. The first was the rise of the liberals that promoted continued market reforms, human rights reforms, decreased government power, and a transition into multiparty democracy. On the opposite side, the New Left saw these market reforms and the ensuing social division as a betrayal of the PRC's original goal of creating an equitable society. They also saw capitalism and globalism as imperialist, especially American imperialist, forces that China needed to find an alternative to.¹¹⁶

Wang Hui, a prominent New Left scholar, is quick to point out that the New Left is not against market reform, but they do not agree with how it is being implemented and the path adherence to Western policies, such as the Washington Consensus, would lead to. He cites social division caused by capitalism as the main driving force behind Tiananmen, and criticizes Deng's government for proceeding improperly after the crisis. He writes that they decided to "employ state violence and monopolization to guarantee the smooth transition of a Chinese economy in crisis to one based on market mechanisms, in the process wrecking all the equitable features of the social guarantees contained within the old system."¹¹⁷ In reaction to the liberal school's belief that increased market reforms and a decentralized state are the solutions to social division, Wang

¹¹⁵ Chaohua Wang, "Introduction," *One China Many Paths*, London: Verso, 2003: 19

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 28-35.

¹¹⁷ Wang Hui, *China's New Order*, edited by Theodore Hutters, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003: 117.

lists four main counterarguments as the foundation of this thought. First, increased capitalism requires increased government action to preserve social equality. Similarly, this cannot be viewed as being against marketization, but as actions against corruption. Third, there are fundamental differences between “market hegemony” and isolationism, trade protection and opposing the market. In specific example, he argues that “the social movement that has sprung up in response to the WTO [... is] aimed at pushing international organizations... and international regulations in a democratic direction.”¹¹⁸ Finally, only through such government reforms can there be true market competition.¹¹⁹ Therefore, the New Left is not a revival of strict Maoist policies, but a new mixture of several ideologies in pursuit of a different future. It represents an ideological boost of these Marxist trends that have prevailed through the Party’s governing and modernization ideology since its founding.

This then changes the nature of discourse surrounding China’s continued modernization. First, in the debate between the Washington Consensus and the Beijing Consensus, intent and a broader view of history need to be used in evaluating the degree to which China has followed the Washington Consensus. Should intent, policy justification, and guiding ideology be taken into account? Are neoliberal economic reforms still part of the Washington Consensus if they are adopted in a Marxist context? Overall, political reform should be evaluated along with economic reform in discussions regarding modernization models. Economics do not occur in a vacuum and can shed additional light on why some countries succeed and others do not.

Second, it makes the inevitability of multi-party democratization and full capitalist development too great an assumption. The Party has not abandoned Marxism and has derived

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 123.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

benefits from it. In true communism, people are theoretically freed from all oppression to the extent that the state need not exist. However, since communism to such an extent is not feasible, the Party can stay true to its goals of approaching as close to communism as possible by instituting rule of law and guaranteeing the other fundamental rights needed for everyone to achieve their potential. The next few years will be vital in determining this as China encounters the middle-income trap and continues participation in international institutions. However, the existence of a communist ideal opens the door to possible alternative forms of modernization.

Finally, there are possible international implications for a Marxist model leading the development of a rising economic superpower. China is strengthening ties with Africa and South America, leading to the possibility of ideological sharing. The Chinese government has not endorsed a China model, which could lead to several results. Misinterpretation of China's actions could lead to history's repetition of the Great Leap Forward or Cultural Revolution. A planned economy without Mao's dialectics or democratic intent could give rise to additional despotic regimes in the style of North Korea. But if the government did endorse a model that challenges the Washington Consensus, could that model be proliferated without sparking a strategic rivalry or threatening the delicate balance between China and its democratic regional neighbors? The last time Marxism was an active part of global politics, the world was engaged in a fifty-year Cold War dotted with numerous hot wars over ideology, but US-China relations are not the same as US-Soviet relations leading up to 1945. As the government begins to turn off the capitalist road, additional research needs to be done to prepare for these implications. Change is destabilizing even in the best of times and that is dangerous in such a large, powerful country. Only by acknowledging Marxism's continued influence can the world be prepared for China's continued development.

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