

This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>



From Aspiration to Actuality under Xi Jinping: Reinterpreting the Outcome-driven Debate towards the Role of Historical Materialism in China's Rise, 1949–2021

Dessein, Axel

*Awarding institution:*  
King's College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

#### END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT



**Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page** this work is licensed

under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

#### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [librarypure@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:librarypure@kcl.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC POLICY  
DEPARTMENT OF WAR STUDIES  
CENTRE FOR GRAND STRATEGY

# FROM ASPIRATION TO ACTUALITY UNDER XI JINPING

*Reinterpreting the Outcome-driven Debate towards the  
Role of Historical Materialism in China's Rise, 1949 – 2021*

Axel Dessein, MA

Supervisors:

Dr. Nicola Leveringhaus, King's College London

Prof. Kerry Brown, King's College London

Dissertation prepared for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in War Studies Research

Committee:

Dr. Oliver Turner, University of Edinburgh

Dr. Peter Marcus Kristensen, University of Copenhagen

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

*For my wife Jade Dessen (née Marshall),  
for your endless support and encouragement.*

*For my parents Lieven and Ann Dessen-Expeel,  
for giving me all the opportunities in life.*

*For my Pépé Willy Expeel and best friend Kerrin Bailey,  
in loving memory – you are always with me.*

# Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals who have played a crucial role in my Ph.D. journey. Their support, encouragement, and guidance have been instrumental in the successful completion of this research. The following list is admittedly insufficient, but I will ensure to personally thank anyone else that I may have forgotten to name here.

First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my thesis supervisors, Dr. Nicola Leveringhaus of the War Studies Department, King's College London and Prof. Kerry Brown of the Lau China Institute, King's College London. It has been a distinct honour to learn directly from these academic giants in their respective fields.

I would also like to express my immense appreciation to the members of my thesis committee: Dr. Oliver Turner, of Edinburgh University and Dr. Peter Marcus Kristensen, of University of Copenhagen whose tough and extensive comments, questions, and observations greatly improved both this dissertation as well as my thinking about this the topic. A word of deep appreciation ought also to be extended to Dr. Robert Weatherley, of Cambridge University, who read earlier drafts of this thesis and tested them vigorously during the mini-Viva.

Professor John Bew, Dr Maeve Ryan, and Dr Jessica Carden for welcoming me so warmly to London in 2018 and setting me up for a continued academic journey that led me to explore my interests and start the work on this dissertation. I also would like to thank my full cohort, and everyone else at the Centre for Grand Strategy for their continuous encouragement, inspiration, and support through our many discussions.

Thank you also to the full Editorial team at the Strife Blog & Journal, as well as its many authors and editors, for being a constant source of joy and inspiration; and for teaching me much more about the world and all its regions.

Andrea Bonfanti at Wuhan University for allowing me to present previous versions of my research to an international audience, and for showing me around that wonderful city on the Yangtze.

Professor David Farrell and Dr. Alex Dukalskis, as well as my wonderful group of students at the University College Dublin for giving me the opportunity to teach their Introduction to Chinese Politics module during the early half of 2021. I hope I was able to teach them as much as they taught me.

A word of gratitude also for the financial support provided by The Leverhulme Trust, which allowed me to pursue this research without financial constraints.

I am most grateful to my extended family in the UK and Belgium. They are all that I hold dear... and frequently have to deal with many books and articles that, for some reason, made it all around their houses! Thank you to my wife Jade and the girls Zahara and Isla. Thank you to my parents Lieven and Ann, as well as my siblings Lauren and Noortje.

To my beloved son Mathéo: your arrival has filled my world with boundless happiness, joy, and purpose. You are now frequently sitting next to me (or jumping from one shoulder to the next) while I make these final corrections – what an amazing experience. As you grow, may you find your own passions and dreams, and may this work stand as a symbol of my love and dedication to you.

The completion of this doctoral dissertation would not have been possible without the friendship and support, the many corrections, and the extensive feedback of all those mentioned above. I am profoundly thankful for their continued support and belief in me. Any remaining errors are ones that I stubbornly, but also unwittingly, may have left in. I dedicate this work to my grandfather Willy Expeel and my best friend Kerrin Bailey.

Axel Dessen

*Evesham, 7 October 2023*

# Abstract

DOES THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY of socialist rising powers influence their rise to power? If so, how, when, and why? The literature on rising powers works on a set of historical assumptions which, when applied to China's rise, predict an inevitable rise to power. In this literature, a new world order is imagined with China as a new kind of leading great power. For some, this development represents the correction of imperial China's historical position in the world. This thesis disagrees with this outcome-based analytical approach to China's rise. It instead posits another argument: in understanding the dynamics of a socialist rising power, the role of ideology matters more than the rising power literature suggests. In the Chinese context, this means bringing the Communist Party of China back into the story of its rise. This Party-state builds on a genuine belief in historical materialism and a teleology of success which it, presumably, represents. Treating the Xi Jinping era (2012 to the present) as a pivotal moment, this thesis understands the Chinese Dream of Great Rejuvenation as promethean. While it fits within the Chinese tradition of organising China in its own image, as a political actor it is entirely new. China's rise, then, becomes much more than simply ensuring the Party's self-perpetuation of its political rule. It is a grand historical narrative which may only be understood, and problematised, through the Party-state's own words and actions.

**Keywords:** Rising powers, China's rise, CCP, Marxism-Leninism, ideology, Xi Jinping, socialist modernisation

# Table of Contents

<b><i>Introduction The Parameters of China's rise: Where and how, but what and why...?</i></b>	<b>12</b>
1. Research Questions.....	13
2. Justification and Rationale.....	20
3. Methodology .....	26
4. Structural Outline .....	36
<b><i>Literature Review: Status quaestionis and key themes in the study of China's rise</i></b>	<b>39</b>
1. World ordering between East and West .....	39
2. Rising powers within the world order.....	44
3. China's rise, imperial history, and temporality .....	61
4. Discussion: Gaps in the literature.....	65
<b><i>Chapter 1: China's Rise and the Dialectics of Historical Materialism</i></b>	<b>72</b>
1. Historical and Conceptual Background.....	73
2. China's Dialectical Rise from Mao to Xi .....	80
3. Applying Historical Materialism to China's Rise .....	96
4. Conclusion.....	105
<b><i>Chapter 2: China's Rise and its Divergent Trajectory: The Sino-Soviet Split and the USSR's Fall</i></b>	<b>110</b>
1. The Collapse of the Soviet Union.....	111
2. The Sino-Soviet Split of 1953-1958 .....	118
3. Institutional Reform in Contemporary China .....	126
4. Conclusion.....	137
<b><i>Chapter 3: China's Rise and the CCP's Original Aspiration: Solving the Party-state Dilemma for Survival</i></b>	<b>140</b>
1. The Party-state dilemma in China's rise .....	144
2. 'Después del triunfo:' The Original Aspiration of the Revolution .....	151
3. The Successor Problem and the Ageing Dictator .....	163
4. Conclusion.....	176
<b><i>Chapter 4: China's Rise and Phases within the Belt and Road Initiative</i></b>	<b>182</b>
1. Distinguishing Phases within the BRI .....	184
2. Interpreting the Belt and Road Initiative .....	196
3. China Going Abroad: Shaping and Being Shaped .....	206
4. Conclusion.....	215
<b><i>Chapter 5: China's Rise and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Decisive or Exposing its Inadequacies?</i></b>	<b>219</b>
1. COVID-19 as a Hindrance to China's Rise .....	221
2. COVID-19: Moral Adversary or Moral Hazard? .....	228



3. COVID-19 Accelerating Existing Debates .....	234
4. Conclusion.....	239
<b><i>Conclusion: Rejecting the Outcome-Driven Approach to China's Rise .....</i></b>	<b><i>243</i></b>
1. Confronting Basic Problems from Aspiration to Actuality .....	245
2. Suggestions for Further Study .....	259
3. Conclusion on China's Rise.....	264
<b><i>Bibliography .....</i></b>	<b><i>269</i></b>

# List of Images

<b>Image 1. A framework for analysing policy and war.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Image 2. The traditional-cyclical outlook of China’s past as applied to the contemporary rise of China.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Image 3. A schematic representation of the primary stage of socialism.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Image 4. A schematic representation of the three ‘great leaps’ in China’s rise between 1949 and the present.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Figure 5. China’s GDP growth (annual %) between 1961 and 2018.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Image 6. A stele celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, carrying the slogan not to forget about the party’s original aspiration.....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Image 7. “One Belt, One Road: With the Silk Road Initiative, China Aims to Build a Global Infrastructure Network.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Image 8. A more regionally-based interpretation of the Belt and Road Initiative and its economic corridors.....</b>	<b>194</b>

# Preface

*I have a dream, a dream of a China that is beautiful, free, fair, and happy. It is a democratic China that belongs to everyone on this land, not to any one ethnicity or political party. It is truly a country of the people, its government chosen by ballots, not violence.*

我想有一个梦想，美好中国，美丽且自由，公正、幸福。那是民主中国。天下仍是天下人之天下，非一族一党之江山，真正人民的国家，政权出自选票，而非枪杆子。

- Xu Zhiyong (in Barmé 2023, transl.),  
human rights lawyer – jailed in April 2023.

With this dissertation, I make a contribution to the scholarship and pedagogy on China's rise and Chinese politics. As will become clear, this dissertation is very CCP-centric, an irony that is not lost on the quote above. Throughout this dissertation, I frequently use the term 'Party-state' as a shorthand to refer to the Communist Party of China. While useful, particularly in a study on the state and the party that leads it in its rise to power (Tucker), it remains a problematic concept. Its continued use, then, necessarily begets several caveats to be presented. The terms 'Party-state' and 'one-party state' are here employed interchangeably to note that, despite the need to differentiate between the political party and the PRC's national state, its one-party system positions the CCP hierarchically above the state authorities. While developments of institutional reform under Xi Jinping further fuse the state and the party together (Shen; Yu; Zhou 2020), previous research demonstrates that one is to proceed with caution in using the concept of a Party-state (Snape Wang; Wang 2020).

Instead, this thesis emphasises (and, arguably, exaggerates) the centrality of the CCP and its ideology building on Zheng (2010, 1-17) and Tsang (2019). Party-state realism (Tsang 2019) indeed is a formidable concept to think about the relationship between Marxism and Leninism, or political ideology and organisation. Ideology here emerges as a highly malleable instrument that ultimately serves Leninist aims. More especially, it serves the organisational framing for the success of the Party and the perfection of its democratic dictatorship. The ideological system is relativised by the existence of this Party-state bureaucracy (a result of a revolutionary party coming into power), which suggests that the party is not wholly led by ideological pursuits alone, nor that China's rise is as preordained as this ideology would lead us to believe. However, the party in so doing is committed to the bureaucratic process behind

the temporal vision. As such, its objective cannot be reduced to a preservation of one-party control alone, or power for power's sake. What the party is instead aspiring to accomplish is a perennial question of perfecting its dictatorship, so aptly summarised by Ringen (2016), to which this thesis contributes.

This thesis understands that the political system in China is a pernicious topic but similarly differentiates between simply using reference to “the Chinese state” which, by itself, further confuses the relationship between CCP and the Chinese state government. As a general practice, the thesis also avoids imprecise statements referring to “the Chinese” as a group, to avoid conflating Chinese citizens and the Chinese diaspora with the actions of the Party-state in China in ways that abet prejudice and suspicions (G. B. Lee 2023; Zhong 2022).

I hope this dissertation will guide the reader to look beyond paeans of China's rise, or US decline, as well as the unquestionable desirability of the International Liberal Order (ILO) or fears of Chinese world order, to show that the world is infinitely more complex than what these concepts try to capture.

## 有志气 有作为

*“With aspiration, act for accomplishment”*

- Xi Jinping, Current President of China and  
Secretary General of the Communist Party of China  
(1997; own translation, A.D.)

# Introduction

The Parameters of China's rise:  
Where and how, but what and why...?

THE LITERATURE ON RISING POWERS works on a set of historical assumptions that are ill-equipped to interpret China's rise. Rising powers are typically understood as pursuing great power, materially as well as in hierarchical, social status. This focus reveals an expectation in which rising powers are always moving towards that objective in a linear, presumably inevitable manner; a notion which by itself contributes to fears of eventual conflict in the international system. The thesis calls this process the outcome-driven debate (i.e. the spatial bias towards the objective of great-power status pursued by rising powers; and vice versa: failure, decline, or collapse) on China's rise and challenges the associated expectations of how rising powers ought to behave. Indeed, an absolute definition of a rising power's rise to power would be the process and trajectory via which a nation significantly increases its economic, military, political, and cultural influence on the international stage – potentially leading to an enhanced position in its international position and an increase in economic growth, military capabilities, diplomatic influence, and cultural prominence (Ross 2018; Wohlforth 2018; Paul 2016; J. Y. Lin 2018).

One definition of rising powers views these states as “rising to become a great power and [engaging] in three types of behaviour: increasing its relative military and economic power, globalizing its interests, and exhibiting internal recognition of its changing status” (Miller 2016, 216). Indeed, as a consequence of their growing material capabilities, such states attain a great

bargaining role in the international system and increasingly challenge the status quo, seeking greater representation within that order (Tank 2012). This thesis will explore the spatial bias in the literature on rising powers in full, with reference to the contemporary rise of China, roughly dating from 1949 to the present. For the Communist Party of China (CCP), this contemporary rise to power represents the great rejuvenation of their nation by 2049, following a century of national humiliation [国耻] after their defeat against Western imperialism in 1839.

## 1. Research Questions

Commonly understood as China's rise to (great) power, this phenomenon refers to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 and its emergence, particularly after 1978, as a new economic power that is to rival the USA's position as the dominant power in the world. It is a rising power led by the socialist one-party, the CCP. As the agent of China's rise, this organisation and its political leadership, appears at various points throughout this thesis. Deterministic in its outlook, the cyclical approach reduces China's rise under the CCP to an ahistorical and non-ideological development that is inevitably determined to happen, with little to no regard for the history preceding this development. In the study of rising powers, a consideration of temporality and cyclicity reveals that the historical trajectory of rising powers often follows a recurring pattern of ascent and decline over time, neither of which are destined to succeed. This dynamic sheds further light on the nature of global power politics.

The main research question driving this research asks:

***To what extent is the Communist Party of China's ideological-revolutionary mandate a more effective framework to interpret China's expected outcome of its rise by 2049 compared to the spatial bias often associated with rising powers?***

The objective of this thesis is to test whether a general theory of rising powers is applicable to China's rise as an ideologically divergent and non-Western power. At the core of this question sits the distinction between taking China's imperial history or its contemporary

ideological system as the basis for its strategising over the long-term. While there is nothing preordained nor unavoidable about its rise, the Party-state cleverly capitalises on this sentiment at various points. It is here interesting to note a selection of terms, to see an initial, and rudimental, list of expressions of China's rise over time and how it added to the belief towards China's ever greater assertiveness. While this list is by no means conclusive, it summarises certain *Leitmotiven* that run through the debate on China's rise:

- From peaceful rise [和平崛起] or peaceful development [和平发展] as well as the establishment of a harmonious society [和谐社会] and the creation of a harmonious world [和谐世界] under Hu Jintao (B. Zheng 2013; Okuda 2016; B. Dessein 2019); to the more ethnonationalist notions of a Chinese people's community [中华共同体] and a world with common destiny [命运共同体];
- From the maxim for China to "bide its time, hide its strength" [韬光养晦] under Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping's more proactive "striving for achievement" [奋发有为] (Yan 2014; Weissman 2015) or, more recently, "actively accomplishing things" [积极作为] (XSYZ 2023; Doshi 2019);
- From the Century of Humiliation [百年国耻] (1839-1949) to the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese People [中华民族的伟大复兴] (Carrai 2017; Foot 2019);
- From describing China's rise as an "inevitable trend of the time" [历史潮流] to the "[structural] changes unseen in a century" [百年未有之大变局] (Yuan 2020; Doshi 2021, 2).

By reframing the debate on this socialist rising power in this way, it allows the thesis to interrogate the role of the Party-state within China's rise. It is argued that, in moving the goalposts from aspiration to aspiration (see also J. Brown 2021, 690-694), the CCP is fulfilling its revolutionary-ideological mandate. Rather than referencing that future alone, however, the Party-state is also perpetuating itself by way of that past, "supplying [itself] with a long heritage" (Clive 1989, 7). Unsurprisingly, this "fragility and uncertainty about the non-material aspects"



of China's rise is a source of great concern for the Chinese leadership today (Feigenbaum 2017). It is for this reason that in the period under Xi Jinping there is a growing sense of urgency to fulfil the country's rise. This trend runs parallel to the country's economic slowdown (D. Bandurski 2019; Xinhua 2019). The shift away from an emphasis on economic growth does not necessarily mean that China's rise is over. Instead, it shows that this new era is a period in which the abstractions of historical materialism are to become concretised, and its promised manifestations are to be delivered.

It is this process that this thesis' title refers to: a move from aspiration to actuality; the concrete manifestation of what Ford calls China's abstract *Idealpolitik* (2015) or the oneiric imagination of that particular future (Lee 2015). Building on the above, this research question is driven by the debate on China's rise and asks whether spatial ambitions (abstract or concrete) are the best determinants of a rising power's trajectory; or whether a temporal approach is more informing about the changes in a rising power's status and its associated behaviour. As a conceptual study of China's rise, this thesis thus has epistemological, as well as ontological relevance to the ongoing debates on China's rise (Zelikow 2016). Arguments that follow contend that:

- China's rise is not merely about material growth, economic development, nor international status. A clear ideological dimension of internal rejuvenation of China, as led by the CCP, is important and cannot be dismissed;
- Party-state survival is not the retention of power itself but the self-perpetuation of party leadership which even figures above the survival of the nation-state; and
- Domestic objectives and challenges matter greatly. How these are understood and approached in a sense that is consistent with the Party's ideology contributes to a better understanding of China's rise, and thus the ability to make sound judgments on its behaviour abroad.

This thesis argues that the debate ought to focus on the question of whether China is presently rising differently from previous examples in history, building on its divergent ideological character; and not if China will be a new brand of great power after completing its rise (Larson 2015). Such an approach reflects not only a deterministic bias but also a form of anticipation. In other words, it is only after we understand the “when” of China’s rise that the other parameters (“what” is China pursuing, “how” it will get there, and “why” is it pursuing its objectives) can become clear. A temporal (time-based) approach, based on a study of China’s ideology features as a supplementary tenet without which an understanding of this rising power’s rise to power cannot be reached.<sup>1</sup> As such, this thesis does not refute but rather supplements and thereby adjusts the existing debate on China’s rise which is largely held according to the circular logic outlined above (see also Campbell 2020; McCourt 2021).

Secondary questions that emerge from this research are:

- What role did the political party organisation play in shaping the trajectory of China’s rise to power, and how did this affect the Party’s domestic and foreign policies?
- How do temporal (time-based) and spatial (geographic and / or in terms of hierarchical social status) differ in their analyses of a rising power, and what insights can be gained by integrating these two approaches in the study of China’s rise to power?
- To what extent do generalised narrative on the rise and fall of great powers fail to accurately analyse a socialist rising power such as China’s rise?

To understand China’s rise today, it is important to take the Party-state seriously. This thesis does so by interrogating the predominantly Western conceptualisation of rising powers, while also problematising the Sinocentric narrative so closely associated with a return to the

---

<sup>1</sup> As Arendt notes, the most useful definition of ‘ideology’ is perhaps the original Greek. Striking in its simplicity, it distinguishes between *ĩđĩđĩ* (the idea) and *-λoγĩĩĩ* (its study), referring to the study, or the logic, of the idea of the state and its goals. As such, it encapsulates the world outlook of the Party-state and its people on time, space, the past, the present, the future; and the pursuits, risks, and fears that the nation during this rise to great-power status will be confronted with. To Arendt, this ideology is not something that is but, rather, an unfolding process “which is in constant change” and the logical process that can be deduced from it. See Arendt, Hannah. 2017. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London: Penguin Random House, pp. 616-620.

presumably traditional geopolitical constellation centred around China as the Middle Kingdom. The spatial bias towards rising power, which disregards ideological divergence in favour of their similarity in great-power ambitions, disregards the socialist nature of China's rise as led by the CCP, its main political actor. As a result, two separate but related conclusions on the future of this rising power are reached. The first is the circular, and therefore contradictory assertion that because of US decline, China's rise is will inevitably come about; yet because of the nature of its political system, it remains susceptible to failure through obsolescence. Secondly, there is also the understanding that through China's rise, a new world order will emerge which will demonstrate that China, unlike its historical predecessors, is a different brand of great power – not only ideologically but also because of its cultural appeal.

### **Research Gap**

This contradiction may be described as *Sinophrenia*, or the “simultaneous belief that China is about to collapse and about to take over the world” (Orlik 2020, 187). In other words, China's successful rise would showcase the emergence of a “new type of great power” (Larson 2015); its failure, the eventual demise of its political system. In moving past this outcome-based approach to China's rise, this thesis puts forward the central role of China's Party-state and its ideology in guiding China's rise forward. In so doing, it accentuates the importance of the trajectory towards great-power status, rather than just that outcome.

In the study of China's rise, the spatial bias towards great-power status is demonstrated by the assumption that such a process can only be achieved through the material growth of its economic and military capabilities, which it then ought to demonstrate – peacefully or otherwise – as exceeding those of the dominant power in the international system. In China, this ambition is referred to as “wealthy nation, strong army” [富国强兵] (Schell, Orville; Delury 2013, 386).

This process of the rise and fall of nations is, thus, a relative one following on the dominant power's "sustained loss of economic and military capabilities relative to one or more other powers" (Shiffrin 2018a, 2). Research naturally focuses on the question of "where" China is moving to and "how" (economically and militarily) it will do so. Questions that are consequently asked, wonder if "China is a revisionist power (Kastner, Scott L.; Saunders 2011)," whether it is "keen to reconstruct a (neo)imperial system (Dreyer 2015)," and "what a Chinese world order will look like." (Rolland 2021).

While these queries are crucial to understanding the future of China's rise, they showcase little engagement with the position of the questions "when" (temporally, in time) and "what" China's rise means for both China and the world. Failing to respond to these parameters leaves primordial questions unanswered, as it leaves matters of foreign policy and scholarly understanding inadequately informed. Instead, analyses talk about an imminent yet undefined new world order and a Chinese century that will come in its wake (Ford 2015a). These predictions are themselves, in turn, informed by the equally elusive notions of China creating a *community with a common destiny for mankind* [人类命运共同体].

These approaches illustrate the spatial bias towards the rising power's pursuit of great-power status, in what this thesis called the outcome-driven debate on China's rise. It illustrates the narrow application of the narrative rise and fall literature of history's great powers and the inevitable character of war (Kennedy 1988). While meritful, this application fails to consider the dynamics of a rising power *during its rise to power*, especially where such a power is ideologically divergent from historical examples (Brooks; Wohlforth 2016; Nymalm 2020). The determinism of this spatial approach, then, naturally views the rising power as inevitably successful in reaching that great-power status but, when applied to a socialist rising power, also untenable. Such "puzzling observations" about China as an oddity (D. C. Clarke 2003), or again

that belief that China, as a socialist rising) power is anything but a normal state (Shlapentokh 2017).

The assumption that China will evidently reach great-power status, however, is not only ahistorical, it also ignores the rich temporal strategy that the Party-state is tracing and therefore lacks explanatory depth in its approach to this socialist rising power. In terms of parameters, reaching an understanding of this trajectory (the “when”), will inform the “what,” the “how” and the “why” will benefit from bringing the Party-state much closer into the debate (see also the Appendix, below). Think of the annual national congress and the five-yearly party congresses, for example. These plenary meetings, together with decennial anniversary celebrations are interesting windows into that temporal frame. They are a “chosen series of events, [a] cyclically reinvigorate[ing] progress” in which the Party-state consistently reproduces itself through speeches, state plans, and celebrations (Lazar 2019, 6; 13-15). It does so via acts of ritualised performance which give directionality to China’s rise during plenums and other Party-state conventions (K. Brown 2021; Barmé 2021; Jin 2023). The constant recycling of this scenario may, then, be called the arithmetic of the socialist state (Leys 1998, 783-784).

By investigating the country’s different phases of development in connection with present aspirations and capabilities and the future objective of great-power status that is visible therein. It follows Pocock who notes that “neither ‘vision’ nor ‘time’ ought [to] be used in a way [limited to] what politics generates in and for itself (1969, 295). Instead of studying the specific political visions of the elite leadership at any given time since 1949, this thesis puts forward an interpretation of China’s rise as the product of a long-term evolution as reflected by historical materialism. Perceived in this way, the pretence to order and consistency that sits behind the long-term thinking of, for example, the five-year plans, is only partially true. It also

induces inertia in government, as the reaching of the inevitable objectives may seem to require unthinking devotion.

## 2. Justification and Rationale

The story of China's rise is one of historical and contemporary significance, characterised by rapid economic growth, social transformation, and an expanded global footprint. This nation's ascent has frequently captured the attention of scholars and policymakers, who are engaging in an ongoing debate into the causes of this phenomenon, as well as the consequences that it holds for the international, world order. To the question of "what" China wants, runs through the debate on China's rise. When, why, and how China will achieve its objectives are extensions of that basic question: they each connect to particular strands of the literature which, in one way or another, seeks to approximate an understanding of what drives the rise of China, and its presumed ascent on the world stage. Having set the stage with an overview of this thesis' research topic, the literature review that follows will provide an exploration of the key themes, debates, and concepts in the study of rising powers, and China's rise in particular.

Generally understood as pursuing great-power status, a **rising power** is here defined as a state that is growing in its ability to influence international affairs and wishes to be recognised as holding that power, now or in the future (Lebow 2010, 92; M. C. Miller 2016, 211–12). Consequently, a great power is defined as a "state with the resources to make a good showing in a fight with the strongest state in the international system" (Shiffrinson 2018a, 13–14). Rising powers are defined against declining powers. This concept often refers to an erstwhile or present dominant state (often labelled the world's hegemon) against whose presumed relative decline, the new state defines its rise to power. In other words, a rising power's rise to power is never absolute, as it does not only depend on the inherent attributes and independent trajectory of nation, but also on the relative position of other countries, including the dominant power, in the

existing international political system. Shiffrinson offers a useful nuance: “The real risk of antagonizing the United States during a period when the United States will retain significant capabilities to make China pay dearly for aggrandisement means Chinese predation should remain limited in scope” (Shiffrinson 2018a, 65; 76).

**Spatiality** is here defined as the physical and metaphysical (or social) place that a state occupies or intends to occupy now or at any point in the future; or the area over which a state intends to project its power on a global scale (Cloke, Crang, & Goodwin in Weaver 2020, 2; see also Lambach 2022; Agnew 1994). It is also possible to think about the difference between spatiality and temporality as the tangible geography or the intangible social position of space (status), as well as the physical (order of events) and mental significance (importance of events) of time (Carr 2018, 2; der Derian 1990). The conquest of territory is of course one of the primary drivers of armed conflict (see below on *fait accompli*). However, in strategy more widely conceived, it seems that “only space (geography) has been given its due” (Carr 2018, 1). “The perception and political use of time and temporal issues” retain an enduring impact on critical, yet often neglected elements of time and strategy, such as the “duration of events, [the] sense of transition between moments and eras,” as well as strategic patience and junctures for self-assertion, as well as, crucially, the management of “the duration of peace [and] conflict.” *Spatiotemporality*, or indeed the study of “strategy [as] action in space and time” is here important (Carr 2018, 1-10; Hom 2018; Edelstein 2018; 2017; Lanza 2022).

Consequently, **temporal** (or time-based) ambitions of rising powers are often interpreted from a spatial, rather than a temporal point of view: emphasising territorial conquest and predicting its occurrence rather than understanding the trajectory thereto. Further downstream, such an approach risks falling into the trap of equating a supposedly enduring Chinese civilisation (Pye 1990, 58) with the contemporary PRC (Agnew 1994). While these

topics will here not be explored, the notions that relationality on the international and regional level (as introduced by Chinese International Relations Theory) and the related idea of Confucian geopolitics (An et al. 2020; X. Liu 2021) which, in one way, emphasise a hierarchical order in Asia based on the historically flawed understanding of a Chinese Empire and its tributary states (Shih 2021; Qin 2018; 2014; 2009; Babones 2017). In this regard, research has already demonstrated that the idea of the Middle Kingdom, or better yet, the Central State does not refer to an existing state in Asian history, but an ideal shared by various Sinitic entities throughout history, including the Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese states who saw themselves as the cultural centre in the Sinophone world (S. Wang 2023; Mervart 2016; 2015; Kwong 2015; Ng 2014; Sun 2012).

## **Research Scope**

This thesis tells the story of Chinese politics and how the leadership of the Chinese Party-state frames, through its ideological worldview, a vision on that very development. The presumed inevitability of conflict, in which war is presented simultaneously as the result of China's rise and even the solution to halt it, is here perceived as too simplistic a position to hold. Indeed, such conclusions assume that China is an unchanging entity, particularly after decades of engagement (see below) failed to bring about any substantial changes in the nature and character of the Chinese political system, as well as in its relationships with countries in the often generalised "West" (Chow in Anand 2002, 216).

In what follows, five chapters are presented in which different aspects of China's rise will be unpacked. In terms of contemporary China, it is the Soviet Union that stands out as perhaps the best historical example, both in terms of ideological closeness, as well as the downfall of its system which stands as a warning for China's own single-party leadership. For this reason, Chapter 1 will explore the role of historical materialism as it was present in the



Soviet Union and remains at play in China today. Chapter 2 then explores the decline and eventual fall of the USSR and how its political leadership sought to navigate and avoid these developments. The historical lessons that China took from the Soviet collapse, and which it already asserted decades prior during the Sino-Soviet Split, is then further explored in Chapter 3. Indeed, how the contemporary Chinese leadership is pursuing China's great rejuvenation often goes to the mono-causal interpretation of the Soviet Union's collapse as being one where the Communist Party, as the political organisation, gave up its central position of power in gradual and, eventually, fatal manner.

Clearly, a study of China's rise must be closely linked to a study of the CCP as the central party organisation, as well as its ideological adherence to the socialist orthodoxy. Here, the messianic saviour mentality (see below) presents itself in the subtle, indirect, and patient accumulation of relative advantage (Spence 2011). Chapter 4, then, applies the temporal understanding of China's rise to the Belt and Road Initiative, as it unfolds in stages over time. A similar notion is also present in the centennial goals of the Party-state. Finally, China's handling of the COVID-19 crisis is presented as a case study of how an external event (temporarily) upended the continuity of China's rise itself. During this crisis, time-based pronouncements of political leadership and struggle, arguably furthered the self-confidence of the Party-state. For a full structural outline of this thesis, please refer below.

Situated in time, this study is an investigation of China's rise since 1949 with a special focus on the period under Xi Jinping (2012 to the present). The establishment of the PRC is here seen as presenting a socialist break in Chinese history, which is important for the distinction that is to be made between China (as a culture, a civilisation, and a "Middle Kingdom" empire) and the CCP's China (as a Marxist-Leninist party leading a socialist state). Rather than ignoring the existence of a "pre-communist" China (Giersch 2020, 6; 10), this approach is to

break away from the oft-repeated trope of the nation's 5,000 years of history. This thesis instead focuses on China's rise as a more recent development (Hall 2020, 16). Indeed, the pre-modern imperial history and its "primordial cultural characteristics" were fundamentally "transformed by both Communism and market reforms" (Jiang, T.H.; O'Dwyer 2019).

Because of the stringent reach of this thesis, it is perhaps also good to note what this research does not focus on – and what are, thus, its ultimate constraints. Contrary to what may be expected, this thesis does not seek to contribute to International Relations Theory, nor is it a Marxist study of China's rise. Instead, it tells a story of Chinese politics and how the leadership of the Chinese party-state frames its role in the future of China's rise. As such, this thesis is less interested in the historical comparison with previous rising powers and the insights it may bring into future conflict with China (Brunnermeier; Doshi; James 2018); or the displacement of current global leadership (Doshi 2021; Pillsbury 2016). Neither does this thesis explore the idiosyncratic influence of the single leader (Xi Jinping) on China's rise, it perceives of the contemporary leadership as part of the Party-state. Finally, this thesis assumes a continued rise to power for China, rather than considering its counterfactual: that of China as a falling power – the challenges of which, it seems, would be even more severe (Brands 2018a; Krickovic; Zhang 2020; Krickovic 2017).

Regarding the confines of space and time that China navigates during its rise, such a temporal approach is urgently required yet poorly understood (K. Brown 2017b, 22). In terms of the PLA's modernisation, can its success be measured according to material output, its joint-operational capabilities (Wuthnow; Saunders 2020), or in the geographic spread of its force? With regards to China's rise more generally, much hinges on the question whether China has risen or if it is still rising (Breslin 2017; Chestnut; Johnston 2009). In essence, this question asks where China finds itself in its rise to becoming a great power (Shambaugh 2013; Shirk

2008; 2022) but, also, whether it is able to complete such a rise to power if it has not yet done so (Dykmann; Bruun 2021, 5). Defining China as a great power, then, might be true when looking at the country from an external perspective and in purely material terms (economic growth and military capabilities). The internal perspective, which incorporates the CCP's political character and its ideology, contrariwise leads to entirely different conclusions. The question becomes particularly worthwhile when considering the official temporal outlook of the Chinese Party-state (or indeed a grand temporality, see below). This concept is preferred to the more elusive concept of grand strategy, which this thesis does not consider. Indeed, grand strategy seems to suggest a stable, consistent, and continuing ideological orthodoxy rather than leaving room for discontinuities from that outlook for particular policy matters (Johnston 1998; Shih; Huang 2015; Y. Wang 2016; Silove 2018).

In a geographic sense, spatial indicators are even more revealing than the abstract notions of social status (the subjective and external recognition of an abstract, higher station held by a state in the wider hierarchy of the international arena) (see Gustafsson 2016a; Ward 2017). Indeed, the incremental claiming of land from another state (particularly below the threshold of war; see Altman, 2017, 2020) but also the expansion of a state's global posture (for the protection of overseas interests; see Ghiselli 2020) present concrete spatial measures for a rising power's ambitions. While a useful indicator for conquest outside of war, the literature on *fait accompli* conquests can tell us but little about the (un)limited nature of a rising power's political objectives. Indeed, where does it stop: does China have to conquer the world for its rise to succeed, or would capturing an objective like Taiwan be enough? How, in a further example, do Chinese designs towards the island-state feature in its approaches towards the East and China seas, as well as North Korea (Choo 2016)? Or perhaps this particular focus on

China's rise is mistaken, with better attention to be paid to its motivations to establish its (naval) presence in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

Temporally, and perhaps counterintuitively, the Chinese leadership's perception of time and the future, allows for a better measure of China's rise from 1949 to the present but also how that vision works through towards the future. Whereas the spatial bias in the study of rising power reveals a forward-looking perspective, understanding the historical resonance of the Party-state's mandate of rule will fundamentally inform our approach to China's rise. In so charting the broad outlines of the temporal vision as pursued by the CCP, a better understanding of China's rise can be reached. Presently, however, a certain spatial-temporal imbalance persists in the study of this particular rising power. Studies continue to fill in the temporal dimension (arguably the most fundamental of China's rise) with an officially sanitised version of Chinese history or, in the very least, one built on a perception of the Qing empire to which it is, presumably, a direct successor (A. L. Miller 2009). In steering the analysis towards China's domestic politics and ideology, one complication that emerges is the predetermined nature of this rise, as envisioned by this ideology.

### **3. Methodology**

A focus on temporality and, thereby, the ways in which the rising trajectory is envisaged by the rising power is here put forward as an underappreciated element in the study of such powers. It also allows us to test the deterministic, spatial bias within the emergent theory. As mentioned above, this approach takes China presenting itself as a new kind of "harmonious" superpower but also as an alternative to Western paradigms of growth and governance as but of secondary importance (Hameiri et al. 2018, 2–5; Larson 2015; Nordin; Smith 2020, 370–72). More interesting for the purpose of this thesis is the temporal "when."

Giving it at least a “pretense to a rigorous scientific quality” (Heath 2014, 42) the laws of dialectics are applied onto human history in what is known as historical materialism. This theory of history is here particularly important to study how a socialist rising power diverges from a more general perception of rising powers. These ideological dimensions could be dismissed in matters of precedence, having to do with the pursuit of status, the national interests, or simple opportunism in party politics. However, it is exactly that broad outline, the temporal direction that is of interest. This thesis is not a study in the Marxist theory of historical materialism but one that interrogates the kind of temporality that is envisioned by the Chinese leadership for the socialist rising power that it leads.

### **The Temporality of China’s Rise**

This theme of temporality over spatiality will be applied throughout the chapters. This theme is, nothing new yet, however – and particularly in the study of China’s rise – it is not applied consistently. Following Kissinger, discerning the adversary’s self-understanding is crucial to engage it and, whenever necessary, wage competition against it (quoted in Ferguson 2015, 25). It leads the American diplomat to reject the label of rising power, to instead talk about China as a returning power (quoted in Shambaugh 2013, 1). Such a flawed take again conflates the historical position of China with the current form of its political system. Kissinger’s modern history of China (2012), furthermore, leaves the reader with but few analytical tools to interpret the socialist era since 1949. More revealing, then, is the American diplomat’s simultaneous rejection of historical materialism and any kind of determinism visible therein (quoted in Ferguson 2015: 27). While one can provisionally accept the logic behind Marxism-Leninism (see below) in the study of China’s rise and how it pushes forward the objectives pursued by the CCP, this preordained vision ultimately ought to be rejected. Studying the notions of time (temporality) in China’s rise, then, serves the following objectives:

- (1) Understanding the policy impact of the political vision on time; and
- (2) Understanding China's rise within its contemporary context as a socialist rising power.

Rather than studying how time is experienced across states, this thesis aims to emphasise the policy-based notions of time, that is: the temporal vision of the Chinese leadership on China's rise. Less attention is indeed paid to the methods of trend analysis and strategic foresight, as this thesis agrees with earlier doubts on the availability, if possibility of such research given ideological constraints and, thus, the "bureaucratic risks inherent in the work of foresight [in China, where] a misreading of the world's evolution (from an ideological point of view) can slow down or even abort a career" (Charon 2021, 2). More interesting are, then, how key assumptions about world trends work through in official visions, concepts, and policies (Heath, Timothy R.; Grossman, Derek; Clark 2021, 17–34).

A criticism often levelled at the field of Area Studies (both in its country specialisation and comparative utility) is the lack of commitment to the development of viable, testable, and therefore falsifiable theory. Scholars convinced of the culture-bound and, therefore, deterministic and unique nature of their object of study logically reject any generalisability. The field of Sinology, in particular, is a good example of how a single-country focus on China (Levy; Peart 2006; Rosenau 2006, 229–45; O'Brien 2011) comes to represent a single model that, presumably, defies any and all expectations (see also Todd 1990, 9-33). Beyond claims of Orientalism in the analysis (Ryckmans 1984; Hägerdal 1997), there are two further flaws that are particularly relevant to the current study:

- (1) **The assumption of secrecy and, thus, the unavailability of information effectively renders the study object into a "black box."** These "informational limits often seem to relieve analysis of a felt need to be skeptical about [the] interpretations and to permit [an adherence] to uncomplicated and unqualified, if not ideological and polemical conceptions of [...] motives and actions" of the state under discussion (Rosenau 2006, 232; D. Kang 2020). As a result, the

researcher is often compelled to resort to (a)historical preconceptions which may lead to conclusion of the new state, particularly in the case of China, as unchanging.

(2) **Leadership-centric explanations (Douroux 2015), particularly in the study of a rising power's trajectory, treats "the regimes of successive leaders as separate data points susceptible to disaggregation** into variables and constants, with the end of each regime being regarded as a breakpoint and the interactive outcomes among the variables then contrasted for continuities and changes" (Rosenau 2006, 236). Such a focus on the elite politics of China and how its power dynamics fit against its presupposed institutionalised nature (Fewsmith 2021) can be particularly restricting. It is a warning this thesis itself, with its focus on the Xi Jinping period (2012 to the present) is to confront.

Rosenau's critique (2006) is particularly enlightening for the purposes of this thesis. The argument that "the paucity of information does not prevent theorizing [the state's] dynamics; it only inhibits thorough, rigorous, and systematic theorizing [thereby] downplaying the utility of established standards of social scientific inquiry" (Rosenau 2006, 232; see also O'Brien 2018). Applying this framework onto the methodological unit of this thesis, such an approach ought to spur on a continuous search for better arguments and explanations as available ones become obsolete in the face of a changing reality; as well as proposing new explanations for the topic at hand (here: China's rise). While the literature on this subject is rich, contentious, and often deeply flawed, it remains vague in its conceptualisation. Further theorising is, therefore, urgently required.

To do so, the conceptual approach of this thesis seeks approximation to an earlier tradition within Sinology that isolates the period under the CCP and understand that political party at the forefront of the analysis (Y. Zheng 2010, 1–17; Tsang 2019). It does so without reference to China pre-modernity (Jiang, T.H.; O'Dwyer 2019) but rather as a story of socialist modernisation as pursued by the CCP starting in 1949. This thesis does so by on the assumption that there is great empirical value in studying the Chinese Party-state's declaration of its

political objectives and how these goals are defined over time. The emphasis that is here placed on temporality, or at least the trajectory towards reaching those goals, may furthermore suggest that the process is more important than the objectives themselves. Combining insights from the temporal turn in International Relations Theory (IRT) and historiography with those of policy research, particular conceptions of time and objectives that are to be reached within such a time span can be described as “contingent cultural constructions whose shape, structure and texture [vary]” (Clark 2021, 4–6).

Presenting the Party-state as the fundamental agent of China’s rise in this way, puts forward a contradiction between the Chinese leadership’s presumed ability to think over the long-term (Pillsbury 2016; Sine 2021; Scobell 2022), while simultaneously having to worry about the direct objective of the party’s political survival (which is, by its very nature, much more short-term and contingent). In studying the CCP’s rule over China, then, one can distinguish between a core interest approach (Zeng; Breslin 2015; Tsang 2019) and a grand temporal approach (Edelstein 2020; 2017). By taking the methodology one step further, this emphasis on the Leninist one-party state is rejected in favour of the Marxist-Leninist nature (R. Walker 1989) of the Chinese Party-state and how it explains China’s rise: thereby interrogating the temporal trajectory of this rise to power.

Firstly, the core interest approach focuses on the primacy of the Party-state, in which its survival becomes the base of analysis from which all other considerations follow (inside-out). It is a framework built on the Leninist character of the CCP that nonetheless does not explain why China’s rise could lead to the recovery of lost territories (Hayton 2018; Chubb 2021) and how the recovery of these lands may fit within the direct survival of that party (Wachman 2008; Culver, John; Hass 2021). Similarly, it is too limiting to think about a hierarchy within these core interests and how they serve Party-state survival since such an approach conceives of these



outer layers as contributing to the security of this political organisation (outside-in) but fails to explain the reason why, nor the potential expansion and spread of these core interests in tandem with China's rise (X. Ye 2019). Such an approach could be interesting in terms of explaining China's political nature as totalitarian, an evolution towards a worsening climate often ascribed to this pursuit of (total) security (M. D. Johnson 2020; Blanchette 2020). With caveats, of course, it is insufficient for the thesis' current purposes and therefore not considered as such.

By contrast, the grand temporal approach goes beyond explanations of the pursuit of core interests as a direct search for security or out of the fear of chaos (Khan 2018; Schmidt-Glintzer 2009). Such approaches naturally view an ideological "revival" as evidence for those earlier concerns of (total) national security. This approach demonstrates the connection with grand strategy (the "how"), the CCP's political objective (the "what"), and its status pursuits (the "why"). By introducing this temporal framework, China's rise is therefore measurable (or at least traceable) with regards to such core interests as those lost territories, whether it is the South China Sea (Carrico 2020; Chubb 2021) or Taiwan (Szonyi 2013, 649–52; Y.-H. Lim 2018). Temporal factors (such as time horizons, timing, sequencing, and trajectories), moreover, allow for a further division into short-, middle-, and long-term goals with their respective markers, or artificial goalposts, of success (Edelstein 2020, 387).

## **Source Material**

To understand China's rise from its "measurable" nature (that is relatively traceable through time) and how it is represented in the written word, this thesis emphasises the CCP, its ideology, and how it reproduces that worldview as the main object of study, in a move away from more pragmatic, performance-based descriptions which, by consequence, view the socialist ideology as obsolete and view the Party-state as merely a Leninist entity. Appreciating the contingent nature of China's rise, and the CCP that governs it (see before), allows for theorising the debate

further (see also Clarke, Michael; Sussex 2023). For the purposes of theory testing, then, the CCP ought to be taken seriously in an ideological, bureaucratic, and linguistic sense. Studying the temporality behind China's rise leads to an understanding of China's understanding on the dialectics of history, the present, and the future (Boer, Roland; Yan 2021; Boer 2021).

To understand China's rise, this thesis demonstrates the primordial importance of interrogating the political objectives pursued by the CCP. This political organisation, and how it navigates China's rise, is the main agent of the present study. Interrogating this rise to power, as a reflection of the changes experienced by the Party-state itself, is here an interesting mirror. What follows is that Party is placed at the forefront of the analysis on China's rise to investigate how it understands this development, its organisational role within it, and the changes it has to make to continue this rise to power.

Indeed, the political organisation is central to understanding China's present rise. In one form or another, the geographical space commonly known as China has been ruled by a wide variety of political actors. They did so according to their own traditions and notions of imperial rulership. As a result, the Chinese territory knew great periods of unity and expansion but equally often fell prey to territorial collapse. In that sense, the CCP is no different from its imperial predecessors since its conquest and proclamation of the People's Republic of China. Think of a popular song from the Maoist period that notes: "without the CCP, there can be no new China [没有共产党就没有新中国]" (J. Z. Gao 2004, 159; Denton 2013, 24). Its promethean ambitions of not only shaping the country in its own socialist image, but also transcending that prior history, however, makes a historical-imperial lens of interpretation less than satisfactory.

Given the focus on the debate, this thesis is very much focused on debating secondary literature with reference to primary source material from China that is widely available. An

earlier methodological shift (A. Miller 2018) away from studying China's ideology to instead emphasise elite interviews is here treated as not viable, if undesirable (Berry 2002; Liu Xu 2018). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the author decided, jointly with the thesis supervisors, not to pursue elite interviews based on the current political climate in China. A combination of light scepticism on the reliability and worthwhile nature of such data, as well as the conceptual, text-based approach taken within this thesis grounded this decision.

Despite the opaque information environment, China is by no means closed to investigation. Concerning policy statements and other official documents, Lucian Pye already demonstrated that the mass media in China is often employed to discuss matters of bureaucratic policy that would otherwise be deemed as confidential elsewhere (1978, 337). Chinese sources, as well, testify to this fact, describing the nature of Chinese politics in ways such as “documentary politics” (Wu in Hamrin; Zhao; Barnett 1995, 24-38) or the related notion of “governance by document” [文件治国] (X. Zhang 2017). In this “discursive state” (Sorace 2017, 6–10), information for interpretation and, thus, theorising on China's rise is readily available.

This tradition of tracking developments through publicly available information, as embodied perhaps most prominently by László Ladány's China News Analysis (1953-1982) and Bill Bishop's Sinocism newsletter, is what Leys polemically described as finding those “rare items of significance [that] lie buried under mountains of clichés” (Leys 1990). As such, this thesis is built on two sets of sources. Primary sources include speeches of China's political leadership, as published on the country's main news websites; as well reports drafted by particular Party-state organisations. In this regard, the party's ideology and its use of language (political vocabulary or what can be called bureaucratese, officialese, or *Amtssprache* [官话]) present particular hooks upon which this research is built (Beatty 1982)(Beatty 1982).

Perceiving of the official press in China as the mouthpiece for the variegated Party-state organisation is here much revealing (Tsai; Liao 2020; Qin; Strömberg; Wu 2018; Gitter, D. & Fang 2018). Following Swaine (2012, 1), a useful classification of these sources can, then, be provided as follows: authoritative (those “speaking for the regime”), quasi-authoritative (conveying “the view of an important PRC organization”), and non-authoritative (a “broad spectrum of diverse reaction on [X]”). In so doing, this thesis makes use of official sources as they appear on PRC news websites such as, but not limited to, the People’s Daily and Xinhua News Agency.

Nevertheless, the secretive nature of the Chinese Party-state deludes all this information to a high degree, which runs the risk of adopting at face value expressions of power which are more contingent than they appear to be. With the proper framework of analysis allowing for the testing of the rising power literature, as well as the foundational assumptions and paradigms associated with China Studies itself, this dissertation is conscious of this kind of errors (Dittmer, Lowell; Hurst 2002; Fewsmith 2021). Indeed, any study on illiberal regimes, ought to, what Lelle calls, “adequately bring into words the topic [of study] without reproducing its [literal] language” (2022, 21-22; see also Diamant 2022). This dissertation straddles this awkward balance throughout its pages. While it presents the CCP’s narrative on China’s rise, as well as Western literal interpretations thereof, it often repeats that its position is highly sceptical of one-dimensional claims, by critically rejecting the notion that contemporary China is nothing but the direct successor of an ancient Chinese civilisation once again claiming its central position in the region; as well as other claims which cherry-pick from Chinese history (see Ghiselli 2018; Feng 2009; Johnston 1998). The use of obfuscating language in international politics often acts as a barrier to clear understanding, necessitating a closer examination of the rhetoric and nuances, as well as the trajectory that is displayed in a rising power’s rise to power.

As a “body of practices, beliefs, and language” (Brown, Kerry & Bērziņa-Čerenkova 2018, 326), ideology does not only refer to the body of thought that it envisions, or the organisational structure which is built around it. Above all else, ideological thought is most clearly visible in those key terms, phrases, and the wider language that is used in diffusing it around the country and, increasingly also, to the world. As a rhetorical system but also as a carrier of ideology, it is language that allows the construction of a “progressive temporal framework,” that goes beyond mere declarations of faith to a certain system of thought. Much broader, and perhaps non-ideologically as well, these words and phrases not only “communicate ordering assumptions,” maintaining its pull, as well promoting a sense of “collective purpose” (Lazar 2019, 58). Taking this language at face value makes it possible to understand the Party-state in its own words, but also to critically evaluate their meaning. Instead of abstract notions of ideology and time, the temporal direction, then, refers to the “shape of time and its directionality, perceived by means of a chosen series of events” (Lazar 2019, 13).

It is this theory of history or, even better, the Party-state’s commitment to this particular version of history (and how it unfolds) that is of issue here. These claims to the scientific understanding of history, encapsulated within Marxism (see below), is most visible in the preambles to the constitution of socialist states (Lazar 2019, 51-59; Creemers 2020, 36-37). Just as much as the ideological system itself, this temporality is expressed in words. However, contrary to popular belief with regards to one-party states, China’s rise is remarkably open to scrutiny. Indicative of its geographical size and the audiences it has to reach, the CCP’s policymaking and governance is marked by a campaign-style character (Ang 2018b). The “emptiness” of the policy campaigns (Roctus 2020) grants the Party-state a certain degree of manoeuvrability, while their vagueness cloak Chinese policy in a sense of mystery and determinism. Instead of “farsighted grand strategies,” however, these national agendas are

nothing more than the top-down vision (typically presented in “proverbs or analogies”) which is left to subordinates to be translated “into concrete policies and projects” (Ang 2019b). Moreover, their preordained nature also ought to be questioned, as these goals are never not reached “on time” [如期] in official messages (Bandurski 2021).

As a performative tool of statecraft, China’s socialist ideology and how it is expressed in word and deed is worthy of serious consideration in how it shapes and guides the temporal direction behind China’s rise. It requires us to take China literally, without taking it at its word (Ci 2019, 40–43). If the official parameters of the debate were to be followed *ad verbum*, such an approach would simply be known as “telling the China story well” [讲好中国故事] (Chan in; Song 2020; Mulvey; Lo 2020). The study of the political objectives, encapsulated within the Party-state’s policy declarations and documents, is here crucial – for it grants us a measure to interpret China’s rise with. However, again, as the caveats outlined above demonstrate, this information cannot solely be taken as representative and is to be problematised. It would be more apt to label it late (Tatlow 2018) or even auto-orientalism (Ci 2019, 1–7), strategically blind and romantic descriptions of a China that does not exist based on an ultimate conflation of Party-state, nation, and society.

## **4. Structural Outline**

This thesis is organised around the way in which the debate on China’s rise manifests itself in various interrelated topics. These topics were chosen in terms of the centrality of the main agent of this thesis (the CCP), their widely discussed nature (the Belt and Road Initiative), and their present urgency (COVID-19). In order to take the Party-state seriously, a lot of attention is paid to its ideological and, to a lesser extent, cultural-civilisational proclamations and pursuits. Following Kissinger, these are then ultimately rejected.

The literature review first discusses key themes within the debate on China's rise. It does so by reference to the world order and the role that rising powers play therein, as well as their ambition and / or aversion to upend that particular configuration. By then drawing in particular insights gleaned from historical approaches to China's rise, the literature review demonstrates that a future role for China's rise is not necessarily found in its wider imperial history. A discussion of the gaps within the literature then kicks off the thesis.

Chapter 1 lays the theoretical foundations for this thesis. It argues that rather than an actual grasp on the course, let alone the laws of history, claims of historical materialism serve a political purpose that is rather more Leninist than Marxist in nature. It stands directly opposed to any real discipline of history which may claim actual scientific grounds. Marxist idealism may here not be confused for an actually existing teleology. It is much more a particular vision upheld by the Leninist Party-state lest it itself becomes obsolete and its political leadership superfluous.

Chapter 2 compares the Soviet Union's downfall from an institutional perspective to the socialist reforms taken in China in the period leading up to, and including, the Sino-Soviet Split. It argues that China set out a *Sonderweg*, set out explicitly against the path of liberal democracy, as well as that of the Soviet Union. Positioning Steinfeld's idea of (political) obsolescence against the everlasting existence of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of China. The CCP's is then much more a struggle against peaceful change. The real threat embodied by the Soviet collapse, at least to the minds of the political leadership in Beijing, is the ideological void that all but spells the death of the Party-state as they lead it.

Chapter 3 brings this argument in the present, by investigation how the ideological reaffirmation under Xi Jinping figures within the institutional reforms explored in the previous chapter. It is a historical exploration of how the period under Xi Jinping fits within the larger

trend of China's rise since 1949. It argues that this central political figure, in all his centralised power, presents a basic problem of the Party-state. Indeed, the question of ideological renewal, or perhaps more importantly, the self-perpetuation of the political mandate of the Party-state speaks directly to Marxism-Leninism itself. It is also the reason why China's rise is presented as inevitable, everlasting, and imminently possible.

Chapter 4, then, puts this thesis' lens on the Belt and Road Initiative, that globe-spanning political and economic project promoted by the Chinese Party-state. While often feared as a grand strategic undertaking, this project serves much more immediate goals of offsetting the accumulated resources of four decades of unbridled economic growth. Rather than a vehicle for the final victory of China's rise, which would see China becoming a new kind of global power driven by morality and the pursuit of harmonious order (X. Liu 2021, 12), the reality is far muddier than expected. That does not mean that China is not trying to expand its influence, but just like in China's rise itself, different stages must be acknowledged.

Finally, Chapter 5 explores the impact of the early COVID-19 crisis as a paradigm for China's rise. Did the global pandemic accelerate existing trends or is China's initial response indicative of the nature of a chronic crisis within the Party-state? This micro-application of China's rise critically assesses the extent to which the debate holds up in light of the pandemic and its origins as an application of China's rise. Propaganda efforts, the mobilisation of a people's war, or the repressive nature of China's anti-COVID-19 policies are here put within the wider context of China's rise.



# Literature Review:

## *Status quaestionis* and key themes in the study of China's rise

This thesis' place within current debates of the literature may be discerned across a number of key themes. One is the realist literature on the international order and China's rise therein; the other is much more closely related to China Studies and related fields which follow and challenge the indigenous explanations for China's presumed restoration of an ancient, and, if it is correct, more just, regional order. The current political leadership in China does not play an innocent role here, as it often claims historical grounds where there are none, or where those historical rights stand on loose foundations. Think, for example, of the many territorial disputes that straddle the borders of the People's Republic, including the claims in the East and South China Seas (Hayton 2018; see also Chubb 2021). This thesis will circle back to this point in a later section.

### **1. World ordering between East and West**

Studies on China's rise to power are directly influenced by the place and time in which they are written. In this regard, it is interesting to note that recent developments have seen China branded as a "great-power competitor" by the US (Trump 2017; DoD 2022), as well as a simultaneous partner, competitor, and system rival by the European Union (von der Burchard 2019). This is an interesting move away from the "responsible stakeholder" thesis of the past (Zoellick 2005; Bowie 2016; Feigenbaum 2018). Now, almost two decades onwards since the term was first

conceived, external expectations for China to liberalise (and democratise) should the country wish to safeguard its continued economic growth and, thus, its rise to power (Gilley 2004; Hendriks 2017).

This approach arguably fuelled the West's engagement of China since the 1980s, to transform China from an "irresponsible free rider" into a "responsible stakeholder" and assist in the provision of security and stability international system (Zoellick 2005; Feigenbaum 2018). However, even at that time, China's relationship to the West has from its inception been marked by the classic question in confronting authoritarian states: the question of engagement or isolation (Shambaugh 1996; Johnston; Ross 1999; Drezner 2021). To the extent that (economic) engagement informed the West's approach towards the PRC, it would be ahistorical to note that "[the West] got China wrong" (Lane 2018). Instead, it points to the fact that China's rise, and its political objectives through time, remains poorly understood. As such, a certain determinism continues to run through the failure-of-engagement debate (Dittmer 2019, 1). In his analysis of the shift in Western perception Johnston notes, for example, the idea of a failed engagement rests upon the twin failure of the West to bring China within the liberal world order and the concomitant lack of democratisation of the country (A. I. Johnston 2019, 100–110).

Diagnoses of the current and future world order(s) often portray the Western-led International Liberal Order (ILO) in terms of crisis and chaos (Emmott 2017; Sakwa 2017; Mahbubani 2018). Existing theories that grapple with this topic, including Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) and Power Transition Theory (PTT), deal with the manner in which the stability of the world order is provided and secured by the ruling hegemon, as well as the influence of the rising power on this structure. Hegemony may be defined as the rules and values about the nature of a certain order that permeates a whole system of states and non-state entities alike. This order is underpinned by a structure of power that is, more often than not, presented as the

natural order of things. The critical theorist Robert Cox, for example, makes a necessary distinction between dominance and hegemony, as the material power of the dominant state is often not enough to constitute hegemonic rule by itself. Instead, Cox argue that hegemony “derives from the ways of doing and thinking of the dominant social strata of the dominant state or states insofar as these ways of doing and thinking have acquired the acquiescence of the dominant social strata of other states” (Cox 1996, 151). In this way, today’s world order can be characterised as a reflection of “American power, principles, and preferences” (Friedman Lissner; Rapp-Hooper 2018, 12; Ikenberry 2012).

This nature of the international system is also reflected in International Relations Theory (IRT), which is largely based on the Western experience as a region that was the “locus and generator of war, innovation, and wealth.” Because of this Eurocentric bias, David Kang contends that the need exists for new analytical frameworks that take the Asian context into consideration (2003, 57-60; see also Amin 2022). Similarly, John Agnew demonstrates that our dominant ways of thinking about global politics is time and again challenged by socio-political change (2007, 142; Xu, Jin; Du 2015). Presently, with the significance of other world regions growing extensively, a limited perspective centred on the transatlantic experience. At the same time, however, Cox notes that rather than spuriously indicating the emergence of a new world order, it is necessary to understand the origins and future consequences of these grievances (M. Cox 2018: 339).

The US-based international system, also known as the *Pax Americana*, which emerged during and after the Second World War is increasingly faced with various existential challenges. The two theories cited above (PTT and HST) can be viewed in the same light and have been equally criticised (Snidal 1985; Lebow; Valentino 2009). Such approaches share an understanding of history as cyclical in nature, where the rise and fall of great powers lead to

periods of “crisis and order building” (Kim; Gates 2015, 219-226; Ikenberry 2018, 18-28). It is argued that the global economic crisis of 2007 and 2008, and the more recent post-2016 political upheavals in the West mark a watershed in that international order as it has existed since 1945. Assessing the extent to which these developments made a rupture in the current international system is a consequence of difficulties in identifying epochal shifts in an existing system, since the contours of these developments are often most clear after the fact (see Breslin 2017, 879). Nevertheless, authors note that China after 2016 was “well positioned to take a giant leap in political prestige” (Womack 2017, 389), and that a “post-responsible China [already was] a lot of more revisionist” after 2007 (Deng 2014). For the West, these pressures crystallised in socio-economic trends both at home and abroad. Under globalisation, production had moved to countries such as China that hold a manufacturing advantage, in a development that was aptly titled the “Rise of the Rest” (Zakaria 2009). Shifts in economic dynamism, consequently, resulted in the US’ near-competitors increasingly unwilling to accept the basic framework of the existing world order (Friedman Lissner; Rapp-Hooper 2018, 13).

Such geopolitical shifts of power have in the past led to declarations such as, most famously, Fukuyama’s *End of History* (2006; see also Jowitt 1993, 262-268) following the fall of the Soviet Union. In this bold thesis, the Western mode of governance and development is perceived as victorious, presumably marking an end to the aforementioned cycle of history. In this reading, the West becomes the normative referent from which norms, but also ideas, have emanated across the globe (Stuenkel 2016a; 2016b). By contrast, it often seems that now the opposite holds true. Current writings which, often ironically, announce the return of history signal that more historical approaches to world order are necessary, again referencing historical works on the Soviet Union but also the People’s Republic of China, and other socialist powers that challenged the modern, Western understanding of what the international system ought to

look like. In fact, the West may well be seen as a historical, rather than a geographical construct. A place that represents a distinct set of ideas on how to govern and develop in the world; one of many within a larger ecosphere of contending visions (Hall 1992, 186; Mações 2018, 49-50). Indeed, this approach presents an alternative choice between Fukuyama's, on the one hand, and the envisioned clash of world ordering ideas (Huntington 2007; Pepinsky; Weiss 2021), on the other.

Authors such as Mações and Magnus describe the world order as consisting of a multitude of political entities, each with their own vision of modernity, which are competing within a single world (Mações 2018, 22-30, 49-50; Magnus 2018, 4). It is a common theme in the wider literature on world order and rising power, and one which this introductory chapter will return to. It is the valueless acceptance of the existence of different ways of governance and development (nationally, regionally, as well as globally) that will make this study worthwhile, as it is necessary to grapple with alternative models that are proposed by rising powers such as China. An interesting counterpoint is provided by Chi Lo who notes that the financial crisis of 2007-2008 also exposed the vulnerabilities of the Chinese growth model, such as excess capacity in the industrial sector as well as capital misallocation because of the overbearing role of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Similarly, the rapid accumulation of debt, while sustained by a Chinese domestic current account surplus, remains a cause for concern for the future of China's rise (Lo 2017, 73-95, 105-114).

With such diversity in the world, or international, order, it is misleading to continue to rely on binaries such as West and non-West, West and Rest, or Occident and Orient since these binaries cannot grasp a world marked by "persistent heterogeneity and diversity rather than homogeneity and the convergence of American, European, or Western institutions, traditions, and theories" (Katzenstein 2018, 375-388). And yet, the International Liberal Order as led by

the US since 1945 enjoyed a form of “ideological certitude” (Michta 2018) most famously expressed in the end-of-history these, as well as the unipolar moment (Krauthammer 1990) following the fall of the Soviet Union. However, as this ILO finds itself in crisis, so too are the basic ordering principles of its system, so much so that “talk of order [seems to have] given way to talk of disruption” (Duncombe; Dunne 2018, 25). Against this backdrop, “hard power calculation, geostrategic competition, and mercantilism” would return with a vengeance, following the advent of rising powers like China and Russia (Michta 2018, 25). Their alternative models of governance and development are important elements to study, as they move the debate beyond normative interpretations of the ILO as fixed and unchanging, perhaps even desirable in its basic tenets.

## **2. Rising powers within the world order**

From a broader historical trajectory, where exactly ought we position that ILO in time and place? The first question is whether this system refers to the period following 1945 or 1991 as the starting point of the existing order. The roots of the current world order are to be found in the Second World War and the American military and economic might which was perpetuated through the establishment of various “security and economic institutions” and a framework of alliances aimed at stabilising Europe and East Asia (Layne 2018, 90-93). As Ikenberry demonstrates the relation between order and power:

World War II produced two postwar settlements. One, a reaction to deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union, led to the containment order, which was based on the balance of power, nuclear deterrence, and political and ideological competition. The other, a reaction to the economic rivalry and political turmoil of the 1930s and the resulting world war, can be called the liberal democratic order (1996, 81).

As a result, what ended in 1989 was the “bipolarity, the nuclear stalemate, and decades of containment of the Soviet Union.” The second design, which settled the relations between the Western liberal democracies through an open world economy, multilateral management and socioeconomic welfare, lived on (Ikenberry 1996, 79; Goldgeier 2018). Interestingly, after the

demise of the Soviet Union, “no ordering moment occurred, [since] the events of 1989-1991 seemed to [...] be a stunning affirmation of the order’s essential robustness and rightness.” Here, Wohlforth notes the underestimation of hegemonic emergence and therefore overestimation of American hegemony. Going one step further, Wohlforth argues that because of nuclear weapons, hegemonic war is no longer a viable option for systemic change in world order (2018, 64). A second question then leads one to ask where challenges to the world order might manifest themselves outside of hegemonic war. In this regard, authors such as Linus Hagström and Bjorn Jerdén lament the lack of theorising on change or even the dismissal thereof. As a result, power shifts are perceived as a given development (Hagström; Jerdén 2014, 338).

If systemic war is a remote possibility, it becomes more interesting to document when, where and how the current system comes under pressure. The democratisation waves have fundamentally shaped the “environment in which” rising powers navigate, making it harder for these powers to “assemble a countercoalition of states that would work as a group to oppose and undermine the existing order” (Ikenberry 2018, 49). Such a ‘thick hegemony’ perspective argues that rather than material variables, “the strength and stability of hegemony also depends on the distribution of ideas and identities” among world powers. As a result, “the hegemonic order is likely to remain stable even if the leading state is declining” (Allan; Vucetic; Hopf 2018, 1-2). In this regard, Elizabeth Saunders points out the existence of potentially competing norms and values “as well as the limits on who accepts such norms” (2006, 35).

With regards to the US’ relative decline, Richard New Lebow and Benjamin Valentino demonstrate that PTT has become the “framework for many scholars and policymakers who focus on China” (2009, 389). One of the most iconic concepts concerning China’s rise is the Thucydides Trap, popularised in a study by Graham Allison where in twelve out of sixteen cases, war broke out between a ruling power and its challenger. As a result, Allison argues, just

like Sparta and Athens, China and the United States are “currently on a collision course for war” (2017, vii). While valuable insights can indeed be gained from the Peloponnesian War’s famous chronicler, historical analogies in the context of the world order are “theoretically useful yet incomplete” and as such, are “important to get right” (Kauppi 1995, 142; Kirschner 2018).

Rather than cloaking the future in an epic showdown between China and America, this study takes a more empirical approach on the ideational dimension behind the rise of China. The focus on the challenges outside of war is inspired by studies on the diverse ways in which great-power conflict may play out, such as short-of-war or grey zone behaviour (Mazarr 2015), hybrid warfare (Hoffman 2007; Suchkov 2021), assertiveness and restraint (Tønnesson, Stein; Baev 2017; F. Liu 2020) and the ‘negative-sum logic’ of nuclear weapons and global interdependence (Xu 2014). Indeed, with the continuing pre-eminence of the US as the “military behemoth, while the challenger [China] racks up economic gains” (Wohlforth 2018, 69), it is interesting to study how the order can be challenged in ways other than direct war. Indeed, “long-term shifts in the character of states, societies, capitalism, technologies, violence, and ideas” have essentially led to “different great powers, great power ascents, and power transitions” (2018: 34). As a result, Ikenberry argues, great powers throughout history have been confronted with very different forms of world order (Ikenberry 2018b, 34; 40-43).

International orders can differ in many ways. They can be more or less global in scope, more or less open, more or less rules based, more or less institutionalized, and more or less hierarchical. Generally speaking, international orders have ranged from imperial to liberal. Empires have come in many varieties – direct, indirect, informal, and so forth. It is a form of organized domination in which the imperial state exercises despotic rule and maintains order, at least in the last resort, through coercion. Liberal international order is a system organized around open and at least loosely rule-based relations. Power does not disappear but is embedded in agreed-upon rules and institutions. [...] States are not coerced, strictly speaking, to join the order. They join the order seeking benefits (Ikenberry, 2018b: 40).

Johnston takes this argument further by noting that even the contemporary world order consists of different world orders, referring to the different configurations in existing legal, financial, security, trade systems, among others (Johnston 2018).



In this regard, today's US-led world order is a "wider and deeper political order than any other built in the past." Nuclear weapons and the spread of democracy have both increased the durability of the system through deterrence and the advocacy of a "vision of order [built on] democracy, capitalism, openness, cooperative security, the rule of law and human rights." Furthermore, the current order is not exclusively American, nor is it opposed to emerging powers. Indeed, a rising power like China has benefited from its integration into the existing system, rather than trying to overturn it (Ikenberry 2018b, 34-35; 41-51; see also Smith 2018, 451-452). However, William Wohlforth argues, discussions of China's rise often "[boil] down to [the country's] rapid economic growth. Instead, he suggests to instead focus on the term 'power shift' (2018: 65).

In a similar vein, Stephen Walt argues that the Chinese challenges to the status quo might raise perceptions of malign revisionism, which in turn could encourage a preventive or opportunistic war initiated by the existing hegemon. From a realist point, China's rise is clearly bad news (Walt 2018, 15-19). However, Kai He and Stephen Walker demonstrate that while war and conflict are natural means for a rising power to acquire a new position in the international system, such tensions can be alleviated through bargaining and role-signalling (He; Walker 2015, 372; see also He; Feng; Chan; Hu 2021). Ikenberry notes that there is a lack of theoretical understanding as to what "rising states 'want' and what they can 'get' in terms of the reordering of global rules and institutions" (2018b: 36-40).

In line with such reordering aspirations is the question whether these states ought to be viewed as status quo or revisionist powers, s each rising power can to a degree be labelled as revisionist (Johnston 2003; Feng 2009b; Kastner, Scott L.; Saunders 2011; Womack 2015; Zhao 2018). An interesting study of revisionist tendencies as expressed by rising powers differentiates between 'distributive' and 'normative' revisionism, which respectively refer to

demands for limited changes within the rules, norms and institutions of the status quo and the desire to overthrow those rules, norms, and institutions. A combination of these two strands, as Steven Ward argues, goes on to form ‘radical’ revisionism which posits a revolutionary challenge to the status quo (2017, 2; 22-33).

Interestingly, another definition observes rising powers as those states in which “growing material capabilities produce rising status ambitions and expectations, but, simultaneously, incentives for caution in foreign policy” (Ward 2017, 65-66). It seems puzzling that a rising power, which by definition ought to express caution in its foreign policy, could shift towards radical revisionism. However, by positioning status ambitions next to material self-interest, Ward’s argument offers critical insight in why a rising power may pursue policies that run counter to rational calculations of survival (Ward 2017, 3; 11). A similar study by Karl Gustafsson also emphasises the importance of the external dimension through the concept ‘recognising recognition.’ From the viewpoint of a given state’s ontological security, it is important to note in how far the international image of a rising power aligns with or differs from its national identity (Gustafsson 2016a; 2016b).

A quick cross-section of the debate on rising powers demonstrates that there is a high degree of anxiety surrounding the economic situation of powers such as China (Christensen 2001; Brands 2018b; Beckley 2019) and Russia (Goble 2017; Nye 2019; Von Rennenkampff 2019) and the related challenges that these countries pose in the security domain. Indeed, the relationship between economic and military security during a country’s rise to (great) power is described in great detail in Kennedy’s seminal work which put forward the concept of ‘imperial

overstretch’ (1988; see also Shiffrinson 2019; Shirk 2022).<sup>2</sup> Specifically, assessments of rising powers’ ‘assertiveness’ perceive:

An increase in any of three aspects of power [in terms of] power projection, power assertions or in the perception of these first two by other. [...] The power a country projects and the power it professes [is] defined as ‘objective’ assertiveness, as in those cases where a country demonstrably changes its behaviour or rhetoric. [The] way in which any action or rhetoric (even if it has not changed) is perceived by third countries [is] defined as ‘subjective’ assertiveness’ (De Spiegeleire et al. 2014, 13-14).

The most recent example of this concept is the American empire both in terms of time and space are the country’s sustained military engagements in Afghanistan (2001-present) and Iraq (2003-2011) and its global network of military bases (Lostumbo et al. 2013; Izumikawa 2020). Others have noted the Soviet Union’s *long goodbye* in Afghanistan (Kalinovsky 2011; Braithwaite 2012). Warning against China getting bogged down in similar conflicts, Shi Yinhong similarly put forward the concept of ‘strategic overstretch’ [战略透支] and more recently, in the context of the US-China trade war, argued that China ought to implement a ‘strategic retreat’ [战略收缩] (Shi 2018; Shi in Cai 2016).

Indeed, the notion of China’s continuing rise to power not only has important implications for its growing role in international conflicts, both in terms of providing peacekeeping troops (Richardson 2011; Fung 2019) or acting as a mediator (Hirono 2019) but also for how such growing engagements abroad impact its hallowed principle of non-interference (Aidoo; Hess 2015; Zheng 2016; Pu; Wang 2018). Still others have identified important lessons for ‘war termination’ that can be gleaned from China’s past military engagements. Particularly with regards to the controversy surrounding the Afghanistan Papers

---

<sup>2</sup> Paul Kennedy describes the “problem of [being] number one” that leads to the cycle of the rise and fall of great powers as the ‘imperial overstretch’: “that awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States’ global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country’s power to defend them all simultaneously.” See Kennedy, Paul. 1988. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London: Unwin Hyman, pp. 515-535.

and the risk of mission creep (Withlock 2019), such perspectives are interesting to have. Yet to see the fall of the Soviet Union and the United States as caused by its commitments abroad, obscures the internal policy dimension.

Perhaps the most important strand of the literature with regards to this thesis notes that, while China's rise has been remarkable, the country now ought to reckon with important challenges that the country needs to overcome, should it wish to continue on its pathway to power (Lewin 2013; Magnus 2018; McMahon 2018; Overholt 2018). Predictions of the Thucydides Trap might become more interesting when coupled with an understanding of the (assertive) decisions that a state might make when faced with its decline in power, or indeed when those ambitions are thwarted (see before). So far, this thesis has contested the unique character of the contemporary rise of China and inevitability of conflict with the United States, instead arguing that the rise of emerging powers and the decline of the hegemon are not given facts.

The Argentina Paradox captures this argument perfectly. In brief, this economic paradox describes the evolution of a "set of once-poor countries that are now rich [including] Japan [and] the notable case of a country that started life relatively rich and ended up comparatively poor (Taylor 2014). There are essentially two insights that can be derived from this paradox. A first observation is that terms of small, middle, big and great powers are important categories, especially in term of how a rising power can grow in such a ranking, particularly from big to great power status (Miller 2016). Secondly, while such a rise can fail to materialise in full, it is important to not understand such developments as failures. Japan for example, experienced a long period of economic stagnation following its presumed rise in the 1980s yet the country cannot by any degree be labelled a weak power (Saxonhouse 2004; Fingleton 2012).

In this regard, one can query whether China can be labelled a big or a great power, or in words: has China risen or is the country still rising (Breslin 2017; Wang 2017, 32)? An interesting perspective on this question is visible with China's former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao (2009) and more recently again, by the former Ambassador of the PRC to the United States Cui Tiankai, who connected the PRC's self-identification with the status of a developing country with its goal of great rejuvenation, in terms of economic welfare, economic security and importantly, territorial unification (2019). Here, Cui is of course alluding to the status of the island-state of Taiwan (Y. Lee 2014; S. S. Lin 2016). These different understandings of the status of 'developing nations,' is reflected in the controversy surrounding development loans extended by the World Bank to the People's Republic of China (Bergsten 2008; Lawder 2019; Politi 2019). This argument fits within the abovementioned unfinished revolution, or rise, of China.

The rising power's trajectory and its ability to transform the system remain open questions. Indeed, an inclination towards peaceful change (Kacowicz; Miller 2018; Taliaferro et al. 2018) in a world where "all-out systemic war is [seemingly] off the table" (Wohlforth, 2018: 58-64) risks obscuring the variety and complexity of contemporary challenges confronting rising powers today. Similarly, a focus on the relative material capabilities of these rising powers assumes a direct convertibility of resources into power and influence. This problem of measuring and converting power, prominent within the realist paradigm, has been demonstrated by various authors (Hagström; Jerdén 2014, 337-339; Miller 2016, 211-212; Wohlforth 2018, 65). Another interesting study that is indicative for the wider debate classifies Russia as a declining power and China as a rising power (Krickovic 2017; see also Vilmer; Charon 2020). Similarly, the United States is categorised as being in relative decline but retains clear economic and military power as the world's hegemon (Shiffrinson 2018b).

These unclear categories, especially with regards to what drives the assertive (and in particular revisionist) approaches to the world order, make the debate on power shifts a rather confusing one. With China rising but slowing down economically; and Russia finding itself faced with the gradual decline of its economy (Balcer; Petrov 2012; Movchan 2017), it is easy to question the capacity of these powers to fulfil their present objectives faced with a future decline in power. While it is useful for current studies on a future world order to work on the assumption of a continuing rise to great power, they also must put into question the connection between current visions of a rising power such as China and the reality that it will be faced with in the future. For this reason, this thesis not only talks about China as a rising power but also takes into account the actions that could be taken by that country as a declining or falling power. As mentioned above, Christopher Ford aptly defines such a situation by talking about a China that remains under CCP control in the short-term but “perceives its window of opportunity for global self-assertion and politico- civilisational return to have [...] an expiration date” (Ford 2015, 496; see also Ci 2019). Here, the central role played by time and particularly the question of “what is the best ‘timing’ to advance one’s interests” (Dyson; Parent 2017, 86) features as a key component of a state’s strategy.

Going further, previous studies note the concept of ‘preventive war,’ or the “preventive motivation [*to wage*] war now in order to avoid the risks of war under worsening circumstances later” (Levy 1987, 82; own emphasis, A.D.). It was the Bush Doctrine and its application during the Iraq War (2003-2011) that saw the rekindling of the debate with regards to the preventive/pre-emptive nature of such an assault (Wirtz; Russell 2003; Lawrence 2005; Delahunty, Robert J.; Yoo 2009) (Wirtz, James J.; Russell, 2003; Lawrence, 2005; Delahunty; Yoo, 2009). On this subject, a pre-emptive war is different from a preventive war in terms of threat proximity and particular in deterring or defeating an imminent threat. Since we are here

dealing with much more long-term developments that are the rising and falling trajectories of big and great powers, the notion of preventive war is much more analytically useful. The argument that China is faced with a closing window of opportunity to realise its objectives is corroborated by the fact that time acts a “key constraint,” whether actual or self-imposed (Stoker 2019, 84-92; Dessein 2019).

Yet that not to say that the current assertiveness (Johnston 2013; Chen, Dingding; Pu, Xiaoyu; Johnston 2014) is merely the result of a gradual increase in power between the 1990s and the present under Xi Jinping. Here, there is also the inherent risk of “premature self-assertion,” an action spurred by the self-imposed creation of “pressures for an ever more explicit commitment to action” (Ford, 2015, 183; 197-199); a development that is exemplified by the current labelling of China as a “systemic rival” and a “great-power competitor” (see above). In fact, a trend is increasingly visible since 2016 that the Chinese leadership miscalculated the timing for its bid for great-power on the international front, with the year 2019 described as a horrible year for China and its rise (Pei 2019). Coupled with the current economic slowdown as a barometer of China’s strength, one can argue that China finds itself in relative decline. In such situations, the window of vulnerability for China to strike increases. This argument is most as studies on the Chinese invasion threat on Taiwan argue, here predictions generally envision the decade between 2020 and 2030 in what is called the “dangerous decade” for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan (Wood, Piers M.; Ferguson 2001; Easton 2017; A. S. Erickson 2021).

Broadening the inherent risks of the Thucydides Trap to also include scenarios of falling powers is an interesting query. The question then becomes how such powers can manage their fall peacefully (Brands 2018a; Beckley 2019; Brands; Beckley 2021; Beckley 2023). Miller points to the future status that is implied in the trajectory of today’s rising powers and how these

states (and by extension the international order) ought to go about managing their rise to great power (2016: 216). Here, domestic policies and the quest for legitimacy become crucial dimensions in assessing the impact of a country's rise to power. Clearly a country's pathway to great-power status is not a given evolution that is tracing a linear trajectory. Similarly, Narins and Agnew note that "the full shape of China's new geopolitical identity," a result of its rise, is "far from inevitable" (Narins; Agnew 2019, 20). Similarly, in the invoking of the historical analogy with the rise and fall of Soviet Union, there is a debate unfolding on the usefulness of describing the current competition between the United States and China as another iteration of the Cold War. Here, there are generally two strands: one that argues that China is unlike the USSR (Leffler 2020; Nye 2021); the other that argues that while the Cold War analogy is not a useful fit, its emphasis on the ideological nature of the Chinese regime points to a crucial point of analysis (Brands 2018b; Kania 2018).

As the aspirations of such powers are yet to be fulfilled, they can still falter. The question then becomes how such powers can manage their fall peacefully (Brands 2018a; Morimoto 2018). Here, domestic policies and the quest for legitimacy become crucial dimensions in assessing the impact of a country's rise to power (Foot 2018, 93; Pei 2018, 164-165). Clearly a country's pathway to great-power status is not a given evolution that is tracing a linear trajectory. Commentators like Overholt place the Chinese economic rise within a larger framework of the Asian growth miracle, all of which ultimately have to reckon with a "crisis of success" (Overholt 2018, 1-7). These countries including Taiwan (under Guomindang rule) and South Korea (under Park Chung-hee) ultimately had to shift their political and societal structures toward liberal economic principles to escape the 'middle-income trap' (Lee 2014; see Lewin; Kenney; Murmann 2013). This concept refers to "a situation where a country can no longer compete internationally in standardized, labour-intensive commodities because wages are



relatively too high, but neither can it compete in higher value-added activities on a broad enough scale because productivity – constrained by structural factors – remains relatively too low” (Lewin et al. 2013, 5; Mações, 2018a, 75-76).

Noting the downward trend over time, the slippery slope of the trap shows the moment when emerging economies shift towards becoming transforming economies. One way to escape this trap is for the country to become “sufficiently innovative to achieve a certain level of technological capability backed up by an adequate emphasis on higher or tertiary education” (Lee in Lewin et al. 2013, 108). This development would allow the country to enter markets on shorter-cycles (relying on existing technologies) or by leapfrogging into new or emerging sectors (Lee in Lewin et al. 2013, 114-117; see also Gilli; Gilli, 2019). The contemporary rise of the current emerging powers is not a given, but rather a development that ought to be managed.

The most common references to the concept of rising powers can be found in studies dealing with the BRICS. This acronym brings together the five emerging economies Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (Garcia 2014; Stuenkel 2016b; Cooper 2017). This loose grouping of powers that seemingly confirms the emergence of a post-Western world (Stuenkel 2016a; P. Lawrence 2018), where the economic (and political) balance is shifting away from the West. An earlier, albeit similar concept talks about the Asian Tigers made up of Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan (Page 1994). This Asia Model, as Overholt observes, at its essence mobilises all of a given society’s resources around the central goal of economic growth (2018, 18-30). While many see these developments as further proof of the Western liberal model of growth and development, these concepts all but ignore the existence of political-ideological differences within these countries.

Looming large within this region is China, the country that especially since its period of reform and opening-up in 1978 has become one of the most famous variations of this Asian economic miracle. Indeed, China's economic boom has presented us with a rising power unlike many of those that went before it. In fact, Overholt (see above) in the early nineties already argued that China's economic boom would lead it to become a new superpower (Overholt 1993, 25-84). While the goal of economic growth is indeed primordial, the author is quick to assert time and again the vital role of politics (1993, 85-145, and 2018, 31-40). Indeed, these presumed "triumph[s] of capitalism" are increasingly viewed in their ability to provide a (Marxian) alternative to the western model of economic growth. While in themselves, these models are not examples of "non-capitalist market econom[ies]" in any strict sense of the word, it is interesting to approach these cases from the perspective of their domestic political situation and ideological system (Ishikura; Jeong; Li 2017, 1-11). The question then becomes, again, whether China can develop an alternative model of governance and development, as one of the next chapters will explore.

If the rising power China wants to bridge the middle-income trap (see above), the prevalent wisdom dictates that it not only transforms its economy but also, in the process, key aspects of its society (Lewin et al. 2013, 20). Here, the most desirable pathway is provided by the Western model of "democratic societies [...] marked by a high degree of field pluralism [or] differentiation [where] many relatively autonomous social fields (the legal field, state bureaucracy, journalism, science, business, religion) [stand] alongside each other, forming competing centres of power" (Hendriks 2017, 44). This general understanding, for all its merits, is a projection of the development path of the (predominantly) Western developed nations in which the middle-income trap features as a clear junction for newly rising powers that ought to liberalise in exchange for further economic growth. It is also the basic belief that China will

liberalise (and democratise) through engagement with the country that has long guided the Western approach (Shambaugh 1996; Sevastopulo 2019). Generally speaking, this perspective presents a linear process towards pluralism and democracy as the desired and normative outcome (Y. Zheng 2010, 11-12).

Yet, in China as in the West, socio-economic challenges that accompany such a rise to power (and economic growth more generally) prevail. Furthermore, an overly economic focus risks obscuring other dimensions that are of importance in the rise of China. Can the socialist country, in its rise, pose an alternative to the prevalent development paradigm as described above? Studies on the historical and present nature of the CCP and its policies often invoke a range of different concepts such as ‘fragmented’ (Lieberthal; Lampton 1992; Hameiri; Jones 2016) or ‘resilient authoritarianism’ (Nathan 2003; Hess 2016; Fewsmith; Nathan 2018); ‘adaptive governance’ (Heilmann; Perry 2011) or ‘directed improvisation’ (Ang 2016, 48-69); or the Party’s ‘consultative Leninism’ (Tsang 2009) and its meritocratic system (Bell 2015). While this thesis excludes discussions on the organisational structure of the Chinese one-party state and how it elects its political leadership, it is nonetheless interesting to briefly note the alternative solutions that are based on China’s national conditions. This debate can be traced back to the concept of the ‘civilisational state’ (Coker 2019), or the idea that China is a “civilization pretending to be a state” (Pye 1990, 58; Rae; Wang 2016). The concept forms the foundation of a national identity based on China’s ancient civilisation and its political system that today’s CCP is claiming to be a natural successor to (Y. Zheng 2010).

Most prominent in this regard are invocations of Confucianism [儒学], the Chinese traditional orthodoxy based on the political teachings of the ancient philosopher Confucius [孔夫子] which emphasises such concepts as ‘benevolence’ [仁], ‘righteousness’ [义] and ‘courtesy’ [礼]. The entrepreneur Pascal Coppens in his discussion of China’s innovative

capabilities for example, notes the continued moral influence of other Confucianist concepts such as ‘face’ [面子] and ‘interpersonal relationships’ [关系] (2019, 36). Other authors go one step further to note the “specific cultural traits [that have] constituted a competitive advantage for successful business activity” in what they call a “new science of culture measurement” (Hofstede; Bond 1988, 6-9). Geert Hofstede and Michael Harris Bond note the failure of the economics field to accurately predict the growth of the East Asian dragons, all of which share the Confucian tradition (see above). Instead, it is a combination of culture but also the political context and the necessary market space that explains this East Asian growth miracle after 1955 (1988, 15-21). Of course, as Kahn argued: “Cultural traits [are] sticky and difficult to change in any basic fashion, although they can often be modified” (quoted in Hofstede; Bond, 1988, 6).

A similar debate surrounds China’s strategic culture which refers, as Alastair Iain Johnston demonstrates, to both those “basic assumptions about [...] the strategic environment (the way of viewing the threats posed by the adversary and the efficacy of the use of force) and the strategic options “for dealing with the threat environment” (1998, 37). Here, the wisdom encapsulated in the strategic precepts of China’s Seven Military Classics [武经七书] would have to be “[transmitted] from its formative period across time through the military-education system” (1998, 46-48). While these military-strategic matters can be easily converted to the dimension of international relations, one has to remain aware of the basic principle that “culture shapes but does not direct strategy” (Cornish 2013, 361). The persistence of China’s cultural identity (or identities, as China’s traditional cultures was polarised between “the orthodoxy of Confucianism and a heterodox blend of Taoism, Buddhism, and more localized belief system,” see Pye, 1988, 39) has had a profound influence on the “universalistic claims of scientific

Marxism,” so much so that the enduring culture of China has “made a modification in the dogma of orthodox Marxism[-Leninism] unavoidable,” as Lucian Pye argues (1988, ix-x).

Whereas the Bolshevik version of Leninism was moulded out of the revolutionary traditions of Russian political culture, the version of Leninism that triumphed in China, and also in North Korea and Vietnam, bears the stamp of the great East Asian, or Confucian, civilization. The result has been a distinctive version of what was supposed to have been a monolithic system. Confucian Leninism has its particular styles and practices that set it apart from the Leninism of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Pye, 1988, x). Pye observes how Leninism found ample ground within the Chinese culture yet was also fundamentally co-opted by it (1988, 30-35; 44-74; 87-89; 137-152). However, while Pye’s work focuses on the structure through which the political thought of Marxism is ought to be delivered, it does little to explain how China will modernise according to Marxist laws. Similarly, China’s move towards the Westphalian interpretation of the sovereign nation-state, which prevailed over more ancient conceptions of world order as encapsulated in the notion of ‘All-Under-Heaven’ [天下] where a central place is reserved for the Middle Kingdom [中国], as China is known domestically (Y. Zhang 2016; Dykmann; Bruun 2021), also changed the Chinese state’s traditional outlook. This argument is also cause for widespread debate (Ikenberry; Etzioni 2011; F. Wang 2015), as both socialism and the Westphalian interpretation of the nation-state have fundamentally altered the character of the Chinese state.

That is not to say that the contemporary Party-state does not have imperial ambitions, nor that it does not have the characteristics of an organizational emperor [党天下] (Y. Zheng 2010) but that its political system is distinctly organised along Leninist lines. The thesis will return to this point later on. To suggest such a socialist break is an acceptable notion within the tradition of Sinology. Wang Gungwu, for example, notes that socialist China’s rise is a fourth

such development within the long history of the territorial entity contemporaneously known as China. Traditionally following upon periods of chaos and disunity, the rise of China during the Qin-Han unification, the Sui-Tang reunification, and the modern Ming-Qing dynasties, are here considered as distinctly different from China's current rise, one earmarked by progress and development (Gungwu Wang 2004; 2019). Whether or not socialist China can embody a workable and alternative model of growth and development is, of course, not a new question. This debate harks back to the question of "whether a state-run economy [can] really find substitutes for all of capitalism's working parts" (Spufford 2010, 83). In judging the past of China's rise and the elements that can be extrapolated from such an approach, this thesis aims to put forward a framework to interpret the future rise of China.

As opposed to the situation at the time of the establishment of the PRC, when this fledgling country's rise was yet to start, China presently finds itself in the latter three decades of what it perceives as its 'primary stage of socialism' (see below). While it is easy to present China's modernisation ideal as stuck between aspiration and the limitations that such authoritarian regimes necessary experience from a liberal perspective (Worrall 2014; Hendriks 2017), this choice is largely mistaken. More interesting is an investigating into the temporal vision that is here presently followed but also the choices that are made in the face of expected difficulties along that trajectory (Magnus 2018; Rozelle, Scott; Hell 2020; McMahon 2018). To understand this predicament, the title of this thesis suggests that the current phase of China's rise moves the country's political system from aspiration to actuality. The struggle that is identified by Xi Jinping in his centennial objectives towards 2050 but even more so the time constraints that are identified by commentators make China's rise a race against its very notion of time (Blanchette, Jude; Medeiros 2021; Blanchette 2021b).

### 3. China's rise, imperial history, and temporality

To study the temporal development of China's rise is an approach that is yet to be taken seriously in the study of this development which is to bring about a new (spatial) status for China according to a (temporally) forward-looking vision. So much so, in fact, that an understanding of the temporality (the “when”) behind China's rise is here explicitly put forward as the missing link between the political objectives (the “what”), great-power status (the “why”), and the grand strategy (the “how”). In other words, this thesis contends that only by combining an understanding of when the political objectives are to be reached with the (grand) strategies that are formulated towards these, can a proper understanding be reached about China's rise. Stoker's (2019) placement of the relative position of grand strategy with relation to a state's political objectives and its (military, economic, diplomatic) strategies, is here particularly useful.



**Image 1.** A framework for analysing policy and war (Stoker 2019, 22)

As valuable as this framework is, it is not yet suitable for the purposes of this thesis. Indeed, it is set against grand strategic interpretations of China's rise, as well as, most directly, against those often-heard tropes of the Chinese leadership and its ability to think and therefore make strategy over the long-term. Instead, it follows what Edelstein calls grand temporality (2020).

By applying Stoker's model, then, this thesis aims not only to put forward an understanding of the political objectives behind China's rise, from a political-ideological perspective but, also, to do so according to a study of the temporal trajectory (strategy) towards these objectives.

Up to now, this thesis focused on outlining the debate on China's rise from a rather theoretical perspective and how it ought to be shifted towards a study of its temporal direction, or the political vision over time (that is nonetheless problematised). Since this thesis argues that an interrogation of the Chinese Party-state's political objectives is necessary, it is only natural that some time is dedicated on understanding this political entity.

The study of time is particularly relevant in the field of strategic thinking, as it is most closely related to research on war and conflict. Think for example of the concept of 'limited war' and the escalation thereof over time (Stoker 2019, 88–92). On a more general level, the field of Political Philosophy and particularly its study of the political vision and "how political experience generates concepts of time, and of political society and human existence as perceived in the context of time" (Pocock 1969, 295). It suggests a certain affinity in understanding temporality behind the strategic visions of a state's leadership. Even more closely related, the field of Operational Code Analysis (OCA) is particularly interested in the 'timing' by which a state actor seeks to advance its national interests (Dyson, Stephen Benedict; Parent 2017, 86). Specifically in the case of China's rise, works such as Swaine and Tellis' *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy* (2000) favour an investigation of China's "calculative security strategy" and its assessment of the threats and opportunities towards the country's immediate and long-term rise to power (97–150).

A related field of enquiry, which is rapidly gaining ground in the study of China, deals with the changes in China's international behaviour and how the balance is shifting from prudence to assertiveness (Johnston 2013; Chen; Pu; Johnston 2014; Liu 2020). Such predictive



studies build on an assumption of “rapid and continuing economic growth” (Swaine; Tellis 2000, 151). Deserving merit, they focus on the present and future calculations of a rising power, while only more limitedly considering the underlying importance of the country’s ideological system and the impact it has on national strategy.

While these insights are interesting to gather a general notion of rising powers, the temporal trajectory of rising powers, particularly of a different ideological ilk, is still unclear. In exploring this question, China’s rise, as led by the CCP, presents an interesting testing case, particularly for the distinct emphasis its places domestically on ideology and the differences between socialist and non-socialist rising powers that can be discerned herein. While it is interesting to imagine whether China may turn out to be a different kind of (great) power based on its socialist ideology, it is altogether more problematic when cultural explanations are brought in. Calling for greater attention to cultural sensitivities presumably endemic to Chinese culture and history may here inform not only that questionable inevitability of China’s rise but, even more so, present it as more desirable to the current state of affairs.

Extrapolating pre-modern elements generally associated with the traditional vision on the Chinese empire before 1911 and, thus, describing the contemporary Party-state in China not as it is but *by* approximation is a fallacy that studies on China often struggle with (Jiang, T.H.; O’Dwyer 2019; Hall 2020). These challenges are inherent to the Sinologist’s epistemology, not only because of the Party-state’s tight grasp on controlling, supervising, and manipulating the domestic political narrative (Ford 2015a, 11–39); but also, the unique and mysterious perspective with which China is often treated. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the Chinese Party-state is often attributed extraordinary traits (if caricatures) of its imperial, and presumably Confucianist, past. That is not to say that China’s rise will lead the CCP to put forward

imperialistic pursuits but that the nature of these objectives and the reason why they are pursued will ultimately be determined by Marxism-Leninism.

Any assessment of China, be it the increased assertiveness in the East and South China seas (Chubb 2021; Patalano 2020) or its objectives towards unification with Taiwan (An 2020; Hunzeker; Lanoszka 2018) ought to start with clear lens on what exactly China's political objectives are. Stoker's reminder that a clear distinction between limited and unlimited objectives, particularly in how they relate to China's intentions towards Taiwan, but also our interpretations of such strategising, in terms of fears for a global takeover, is here of interest (Stoker 2019, 83).

Set out by the CCP, these political objectives are, interestingly, cast in a temporal sense rather than in an actual delineation of what such goals entail spatially. Indeed, it can be said that these goals are to be reached with the passing of time and are, therefore, considered inevitable by Party ideology. Think for example of the objectives of 2035 or 2050 under Xi Jinping (Xi 2017). The modernisation drive for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to attain the status 'world-class military [世界一流军队],' for example, delineates the years 2027 and 2035. Fravel notes that it is a "set of benchmarks for assessing the [PLA]'s progress towards achieving this objective," with the former being one in which efforts towards the latter are to be sped up (2020, 85–86). The general objective for China to grow from a "reasonably well-off society" by 2035 towards becoming a "great power under socialist modernisation" by 2050 (Xi 2017) similarly references both the temporal, as well as the spatial aspects of China's rise.

From an economic perspective, it could well be argued that China's rise is complete. Yet to the Communist Party of China itself, this economic basis means that its rise to power is only beginning. The sole measure for the success of China's rise therefore cannot simply be its failure to collapse. A more dynamic understanding of China's rise is required that moves

beyond the *Sinophrenic* notions of either success or failure (Orlik 2020, 187). To illustrate, for the Chinese leadership the contemporary period of slower economic growth is explicitly described as a new normal on the road towards consolidating great-power status by the mid-century (Holbig 2018). Revealing of a general lack of theorising on world order and the role played by rising powers therein (Hagström, Linus; Jerdén 2014), there is nonetheless but little understanding of future developments beyond the initial stage of rapid economic growth in China (Miller 2016). Indicative of this absence is the interrelated, and crucial, debate on the ideological nature of the PRC between communism, socialism, and capitalism (Boer, Roland; Yan 2021). Reaching an understanding of the temporality behind China's rise, as spurred by ideological nature, hinges upon this question.

#### **4. Discussion: Gaps in the literature**

The literature suggests a degree of determinism within the debate on China's rise. Mistakenly, it is a debate often held at the level of world order (Callahan 2008; Zhao 2018; Rolland 2020), with China's presumably putting forward a grand strategy (Khan 2018; Leverett, Flynt; Wu 2016; Buzan 2014) to bring about such change. In so doing, this debate thus projects the spatial question of status (in the abstract) onto the world order, with China bringing a grand strategy to exert this transformation. China's imminent great-power status, it is argued, will then bring about a new international system. The lack of conclusive evidence to back up such claims (Ford 2015a), let alone a comprehensive understanding of China's global ambitions, leads to assumptions built on a perception of China's imperial past, with all its associated concepts.

What, then, does China want if not world takeover, or global hegemony? Instead, China seems keen to spread its illiberal model of governance and development around the world, or at least find common ground and acceptance in different regions of the world (Jackson 2020; Breslin 2009). It does so primarily through the China Solution [中国方案], as the next chapters

will explore. This thesis is then not about China's relationship to the world order(s) in its various guises (Johnston 2018), although the concept of China's rise frequently invokes the China-seeks-hegemony argument to justify the prediction that, because China is rejuvenating, it will therefore push forward the notion that China is the rightful hegemon of the international system (Jackson 2023). Seen in this light, commentary quickly connect China to a long-term threat akin to climate change (Vilmer; Charon 2020), the potential success of which would dramatically upend the existing world order.

This contemporary rising power's ambitions are perceived as so inevitable, in fact, because it presumably acts as the restoration of its historical position in Asia and the world. An uncritical adoption of the official narrative on China's rise, in which the CCP seeks to rectify what it perceives as a historical injustice (China's loss of its traditional position in Asia after the later nineteenth century), is most damaging to the debate. It often leads to such conclusions that the Chinese Party-state is more able to think over the long-term than liberal democracies, themselves hampered by short-term electoral cycles. Frequent references to China's long-term strategy (or the ability to formulate strategy over the long-term) are nevertheless useful but ought to be understood within the temporal direction that is staked out by the Chinese leadership. The delivery of promises by the party leadership, or at least the impression thereof, is of the utmost importance for the sustainment of the political system (K. Brown 2018a). It is this vision, rather than the actual future, that is here important to understand, particularly with regards to the military challenges that await in the "dangerous decade" ahead and the difficult choices that may be required of the Chinese leadership (A. S. Erickson 2021; Fanell 2017)

Deterministic readings of Chinese history may here of course obscure more than they reveal. Think of how the debate within China Studies on the historical place and position of the entity known as "China" within Asia is often waged by way of *Zhongguo* [中国], the central

state – but in a way that is entirely different than the historical record demonstrates (see above). The supposed long horizon of *Tianxia* [天下], that supposed notion of China sitting at the centre of “All-Under-Heaven” (Dreyer 2015; B. Dessein 2017), is therefore highly problematic, as it ignores a reality in which time for the Chinese leadership is much more limited towards, at its largest extent, 2049 (Bowie 2019). While a temporal understanding of when exactly such a change is to take place is not necessarily lacking, it is inherently flawed because of the dominant assumption that China is able to think, and therefore, strategise over an undefined long term.

In other words, the Party-state is more concerned with the transformation of Chinese society according to its own ideological principles, rather than the remaking of world order. Even more directly acknowledging the primordial role of the CCP is the pervasive sense of doom that the Party’s demise will lead to national extinction [亡党亡国]. More useful, then, is to think about the CCP as the “most effective modernisers of China” (C. Lin 2006, 16). This approach places the contemporary Party-state within a long tradition of bringing order to China. Under the CCP, this idea of saving the nation [救国], appears in the national movement of rescuing China from its feudal state and colonial oppression (Zanasi, 2006, 30; see also Reilly, 2021). This *Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation* [中华民族伟大复兴], is a Republican objective similar to the Stalinist adage of “nationalist in form, socialist in content” (Tagangaeva 2017; Vujacic 2007, 157). Exactly where China’s rise is moving towards, will be determined by these twin forces.

In tracing a rising power’s ultimate objective, spatial analyses are limited in their ability to understand the different (growth) phases of a rising power’s trajectory or, indeed, what happens in between. Studying China’s rise as the ideologically divergent rising power, then, not only allows us to critically test the rising power literature and its emerging theory but also to problematise the rise of China beyond its regional and global ambitions, as well as any (future)

objectives it may have. In its bias towards great-power status, the emergent literature on rising powers in the international system elevates spatial analyses over the temporal trajectory. It does so in the abstract (status concerns), as well as in the concrete (the actual conquest of territory, for example in a Taiwan contingency). In terms of when such an invasion may take place, US military assessments of China's rise frequently talk about a "decade of maximum danger" or, indeed, a "decade of concern" (see above) in which China's future behaviour is not so much dependent on its rise, but on the opposite: as a peaking, declining, falling or, indeed, a plateauing power (Beckley 2023; A. Erickson 2023; Brands; Beckley 2021; Brands 2018a). These separate notions individually describe an erstwhile rising power's experience of a relative decrease in their economic, political, and military influence on the global stage.

While a discussion of the political-ideological character of China at this point would take us too far, it can provisionally be accepted that socialism, as it entered China, underwent a process of Sinification from Mao Zedong to what Deng Xiaoping would eventually call "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Dirlik 2014). Delineated within the national borders of China, this socialist ideology does here not refer to the spectre of international communism (Strachan in Stoker 2019, 27) but to the explicit appropriation of this ideology put in the service of national salvation and modernisation. Rather than mere long-term thinking, the policymaking of the Chinese Party-state is firmly situated within these ideas of progress and modernisation (not to be narrowly defined as economic progress but in terms of social and economic transformation).

As it entered China and underwent a transformation to fit the national conditions at the time, Marxist thought, or its "philosophical premises of dialectical logic and historical materialism," filtered through in its non-orthodox form (Meisner in Pfeffer 1976, 428; Heath 2014, 42). This process secularised the CCP's revolutionary ideology and, thus, led to the

bureaucratisation of this revolutionary party after its coming to power. In serving national and strategy, this Marxism-Leninism serves “the needs of party decision makers [and] only secondarily to enhance the popularity of the party” (Heath 2014, 42–43). If China is exporting its ideology, it is exactly this Sinified version of socialism (to serve the objectives of national salvation and development) that puts forward China as an alternative model for growth and development. This Chinese version, then, can become a “filter” in its own right for the development of that recipient country in question (Breslin 2019).

Understanding where exactly the basis for China’s long-term strategy is to be found will, indeed, “expose one of the most complex but crucial issues in current geopolitics” (K. Brown 2017b, 22). In starting from the study of the CCP and its political-ideological character, then, still brings in those core interests but also explains them beyond the sole criterium of security (inside-out), as well as providing a (temporal) framework to explain where these pursuits fit in the wider (ideological) frame. Indeed, by moving beyond the immediate self-interest of the CCP as the driving force that spurs on China’s rise, this thesis queries how more external actions contribute to the survival of that party (outside-in). In lieu of an illustration, the foregone conclusion that China’s rise is already complete is so strongly present, in fact, that the concept of China’s rise is often singularly invoked as a building block of wider debates on China’s great assertiveness under Xi Jinping (Liu, 2020; Sørensen, 2015; Weissman, 2015; Yan, 2014; Chen; Wang, 2011). Yet it is too little understood. As a socialist rising power, China is moving forward, awash with ambition, towards a future that, for contemporary political purposes, ought to be presented as inevitable. It is a process mostly aptly captured by Kerry Brown who, in a conversation with the author, described it as the Chinese leadership “moving from aspiration to actuality.”

A variation upon this theme is the revolutionary legacy approach (Ci 2019, 70–97) which puts forward a recognition of the constrained time in which China is rising, again demonstrating that this development is finite. By again situating China’s rise concretely in time, the argument here contends that year 2029, if not sooner, will mark the revolutionary obsolescence of the party, with the implication that chaos may ensue if the Party-state fails to realise its goals and objectives by then (Ci 2019, 36-38). Ci Jiwei also notes that the CCP’s active pursuit of its revolutionary legacy ought to stand at the forefront of analysis, as opposed to research that seeks to question how that Party-state reacts to these contingencies on its rule. The role of the “repressive state apparatus” is here of a lesser importance, as it exists regardless and can, in fact, postpone an eventual downfall of the regime (Ci 2019, 6–7; Gilley 2004, xi).

The questions outlined above aim to move the debate on China’s rise beyond its current boundaries by emphasising the central position of the Communist Party of China. Overlooking the trajectory of China’s rise and, through it, the temporal vision espoused by the Chinese leadership’s ideological vision, is an interconnecting oversight that distorts clear thinking about China’s rise and its main agent. Criticisms on the presumed long-term thinking of the Chinese leadership, then, can only surmise the presence of a highly strategic attitude that allows for the Chinese Party-state to invoke its dialectical worldview at any given time. At its most cynical, this perspective holds that such dialectics allow the leadership to “be right [at all times], since, even when wrong, [they were so] at the right time” (Leys 1998, 789).

The limited conceptualisations of rising powers at the systemic level are perhaps best illustrated by the literature on the rise and fall of great powers and, particularly, empires and the cyclical outlook on this topic (Brooks, Stephen G.; Wohlforth 2016). Since political institutions and ideology at home presumably serve the same objectives regardless, the domestic situation and supranational differences between rising powers are largely ignored. In



so doing, there is but little appreciation of the different forms a rising power can take. More strikingly, still, is that a linear outlook on rising power fails to account for its exact opposite: that of falling powers (Brands 2018a; Krickovic; Zhang 2020). While not considered as such within this thesis, this particular concept is a worthwhile one to consider, as it brings further nuances to the presumed inevitability of China's rise. The objective of this thesis is, then, not so much a rejection of spatial analyses of China's rise (and rising powers in general) but an artificial emphasis that is placed on temporality (of or related to time) instead.

# Chapter 1:

## China's Rise and the Dialectics of Historical Materialism

THIS CHAPTER INVESTIGATES the Marxism-Leninism guiding China's rise and how it compares to the artificial teleology of success so often associated with this rise to power. In particular, this research is concerned with the role and significance of historical materialism in understanding that phenomenon. This chapter does so by arguing that the orthodoxy of China's socialist modernisation is the basis to understand China's rise and, as will be discussed, works along two dimensions: stages of development and periods of opportunity. Rather than viewing China's political thought as an exotic and Eastern form of Marxism, it is important to understand how the ideology was *Sinified* or brought within the local conditions as provided by Chinese history, contemporary political structure, as well as geography (Carr 1970, 19). It is furthermore important to understand how this ideology is reasserted as an enduring element of the policies pursued by contemporary China (K. Brown 2018c, 103–39).

As explored in the previous chapter, the parameters (the 'what,' 'when,' 'how,' and 'why') behind China's rise point towards the defining nature of Marxism-Leninism upon the country's contemporary development and how this socialist ideology forms a useful theoretical framework to interpret this rise (Brands 2018b). This chapter continues the argument by demonstrating the transition from a traditional-cyclical outlook on Chinese history, and the socialist break in history that fundamentally altered the direction thereof. As such, the chapter

provides an initial answer to the question of how China is rising by focusing on the nature of the CCP's temporal outlook, as provided by the Marxist theory of historical materialism. More concretely, that modernisation of China is since 1987 cast in what the CCP calls the realisation of the 'primary stage of socialism' [社会主义初级阶段] (Pye 1988, 79). Socialism with Chinese characteristics has to be understood within this context as an interpretation of socialism that is often redefined yet always with this aim in mind. Under Xi for example, the 'primary stage of socialism' is increasingly referred to as the Party's 'original aspiration' and its 'historical mission' (Lam 2019, see Chapter 3).

## **1. Historical and Conceptual Background**

In observations on China's rise, it is often assumed that ancient strategic thought is carried through in the contemporary decision-making processes of the Chinese leadership. It is "the trap of believing that (from the time of Deng onwards, at least) China has been pursuing 'a grand strategic vision'" (K. Brown 2017b, 21). However, this focus on traditional stratagems risks obscuring more recent developments. As a "perennial theme of commentary about Chinese attitudes towards the rest of the world and their role in it" (K. Brown 2017b, 18–22), China's long-term strategic vision is indeed prevalent in recent discussions of the Chinese state, whether to laud the country's strategic advantage over Western democracies in terms of political decision-making (Gilardoni 2017; Mahbubani 2018; Skibsted 2014) or to discuss the unwavering strength of such an outlook even in the face of externalities (Roach 2019; J. Zhang 2019).

The idea of a Chinese advantage in strategising over the long-term is erroneously illustrated by a statement made in 1972 by China's former PM Zhou Enlai who, after being asked his opinion on the French Revolution, argued that it was too early to tell. This recurring anecdote (Skibsted 2014; Hinssen in Coppens 2019) is often put forward as proof of China's

long-term thinking, as Zhou was talking about the “student revolt of 1968, not the events of 1789 and thereafter” (Fenby 2017).

## **China’s Traditional Outlook on History and Time**

Closely related to this presumed long-term strategy are invocations of the Chinese dynastic history that supposedly evolved like a cycle (Kisro-Warnecke n.d.). In this regard, commentators observe Xi’s China as a “red dynasty” [红色帝国] (Garnaut 2019; Z. Xu 2019a; 2019b) and the CCP as its “organizational emperor” (Y. Zheng 2010). Extending this argument sees a Chinese century or world order in the making, yet concrete theorising on what such a world of a Chinese making would look like is not always readily available (Ford 2015a, 441). Even the *Tianxia* model, and Confucian geopolitics as a whole (see above), again build on a flawed historical approach to China’s rise that is here not only insufficient but also highly problematic as an explanatory tool for China’s rise (An et al. 2020; X. Liu 2021; see also Ci 2019, 147–55).

There exists an inherent dichotomy between China’s presumed long-term thinking and the country’s cyclical outlook (see Image 1), as these elements do not allow for a progressive vision but by definition look to the past. While there is indeed an inclination to see China today as rising from a century of humiliation (Foot 2019; Kaufman 2010), this research aims to understand China’s rise from the perspective of historical materialism and its focus on the law of motion and constant change that is inherently focused on the future. Similarly, there is also a disconnect between “cultural-civilisational” interpretations of Chinese history and the ideological nature of the CCP’s contemporary form of state. Think of the cave-dwelling question [窑洞之问] on the Party’s future that can be traced back to the CCP’s stay in the Shaanxi Soviet of Yan’an in 1945. As reiterated by Xi Jinping: “Our party has such a long

history, its scale is so vast, and has been in power for such a long time. How can it jump out of the historical cycle of the rise and fall of chaos?" [我们党历史这么长、规模这么大、执政这么久，如何跳出治乱兴衰的历史周期率?] (Du, Shangze; Liu 2022). Earlier, Mao Zedong already noted:

We have found a new path; we can break free of the cycle. The path is called democracy. As long as the people have oversight of the government then government will not slacken in its efforts. When everyone takes responsibility there will be no danger that things will return to how they were even if the leader has gone.

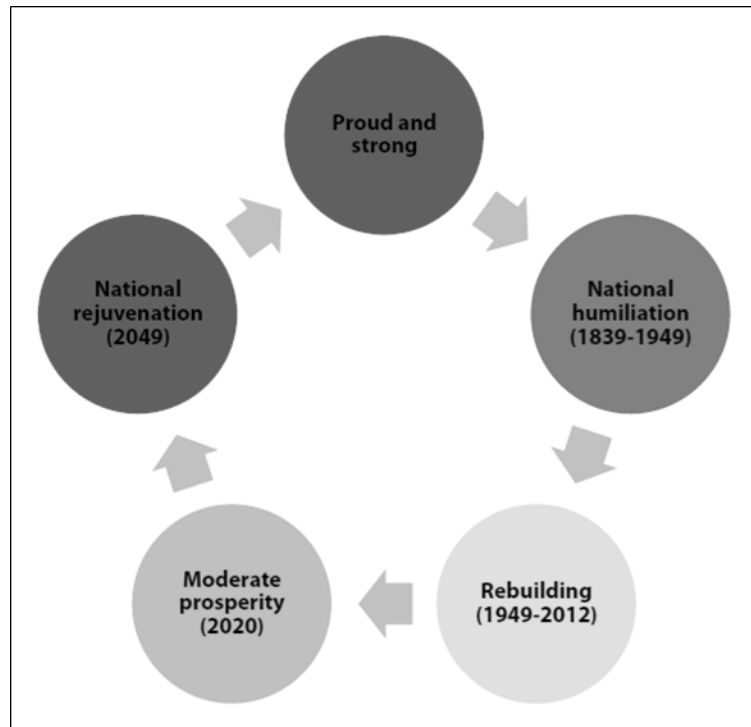
我们已经找到了新路，我们能跳出这周期率。这条新路，就是民主。只有让人民来监督政府，政府才不敢松懈；只有人人起来负责，才不会人亡政息 (Mao Zedong, quoted in Barmé, 2011; Du, Shangze; Liu, 2022).

Seven decades later, Xi Jinping provided a second answer to this question by noting that:

After a century of struggle, especially since the new practice [established by the] 18th National Party Congress, our Party has given a second answer called self-revolution. [...] Our Party does not have any special interests of its own. This is the source of our Party's courage for self-revolution, where its confidence resides.

经过百年奋斗特别是党的十八大以来新的实践，我们党又给出了第二个答案，这就是自我革命 [...] 我们党没有任何自己特殊的利益，这是我们党敢于自我革命的勇气之源、底气所在 (Xi Jinping, quoted in Du, Shangze; Liu, 2022).

Presently, this reference to self-revolution [自我革命] (see below) captures the contemporary CCP's ambition to redefine its position in China for the next few decades and summarises many of the concepts explored within this thesis. It also demonstrates the urgent understanding by the CCP's leadership to reform its party-political organisation. In light of its enduring legitimacy, this concept is explored more in-depth in Chapter 3.



**Image 2.** The traditional-cyclical outlook of China’s past as applied to the contemporary rise of China (T. Miller 2014, 2; image reprinted with the author’s permission)

It is interesting to note that a classic example of this historical cyclicity in Chinese history can be found in the Chinese literary canon’s *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* which notes: “the empire, long united, must divide; long divided, must unite” [天下大势，分久必合，合久必分] (Roberts in Luo 2014, 411). From here of course come the frequent contemporary descriptions of China’s rise as essentially restoring a historical fault, that is China’s presumably rightful position in the world as the Middle Kingdom, and the subsequent creation of a Chinese regional and world order. Similarly, based on this unchanging history that is attributed to China, it is but little surprise that China can be praised for its long-term thinking. Indeed, this historical cycle has started to live a life all of its own, thereby presenting China in a “transcendent way,” and more particularly Chinese history as “changeless, static, and [ahistorical]” (C. Chen 2006, 47).

Contrariwise, the Standard Histories [正史], those compilations of dynastic history and arguably the basic element contributing to the presumed continuity of that historical cycle, by their very nature served the primary understanding that “nothing lasts forever or regains its life or repeats itself” (C. Chen 2006, 47–48).

Counter to those historical-cyclical interpretations, this chapter emphasises the historical materialism behind China’s rise. In this regard, the CCP has put forward a clear deadline by which it aims to deliver China’s rise. This understanding has important implications for how the West approaches China now and in the future. The socialist break in history that took place in 1949 is important here. Former Secretary General of the CCP Jiang Zemin in 1997 for example observed “three major changes of historical significance” [三次历史性的巨大变化]. Here, Jiang referred to the Xinhai Revolution under Sun Yat-sen that “overthrew the autocratic monarchy that ruled China for thousands of years,” the “founding of the PRC and the establishment of the socialist system with Mao Zedong at its core,” and the “reform and opening-up [period]” under Deng Xiaoping (Z. Jiang 1997). This statement suggests that during the twentieth century, China gradually detached itself from the cyclical nature of its imperial past. This outlook was subsequently replaced with a socialist one, following the Chinese revolution of 1949 led by Mao. In other words, the perceived pathway of historical progress changed from a circular movement, often linked to China’s imperial past (see above) towards one that moves upward and onward in evolutionary stages. Contemporary political developments under Xi Jinping seemingly confirm this view on history.

### **Bukharin’s Theory of Historical Materialism**

The materialist outlook envisioned by Marxism found expression in the theory of historical materialism [历史唯物主义], which views history as moving forward through a series of stages.

This theoretical concept has a long history that can be traced back to Soviet-Russian authors such the Marxist theorist Georgi Plekhanov (2009), the economist Nikolai Bukharin (1925) and former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin (1938). It was Stalin who, invoking Friedrich Engels, argued that history plays out “not as a movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition of what has already occurred, but as an upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, as a development from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher” (Stalin 1938). It is clear that there is a long evolutionary process described through the laws of dialectical materialism. Whereas dialectical materialism [辩证唯物主义] refers to the “world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party” and approaches the phenomena of nature dialectically and conceives of them materialistically. Historical materialism on the other hand, is “the extension of dialectical materialism” and refers “to the study of society and of its history (see Tucker 1978).

While it is not the most recent theory, this thesis appreciates Bukharin’s interpretation of historical materialism for its mechanical interpretation of Marxist dialectics, which Bukharin replaced with the concept of the equilibrium. The theory is also not without controversy, with noteworthy critics including Stalin and Antonio Gramsci (Lancaric 2014; McNally 2011). Bukharin’s disagreement with the former, which culminated in the Soviet Industrialisation Debate from 1924 to 1928 (Bean 1997; McNally 2011). During these years, Bukharin opposed Stalin’s plans for forced collectivisation and rapid industrialisation, fearing a peasant revolt. Indeed, Bukharin’s shifting positions on the speed with which the revolution was to be delivered focused on the question of the state’s relationship with the peasantry. Having initially lauded the arrival of the New Economic Policy (see below) as an escape from the Civil War’s impasse, Bukharin became disillusioned when instead of “socialism by agreement with the peasant,” increasing state coercion demonstrated that the revolution would be imposed from above. As a



result, Bukharin became “content to relegate revolution to a distant future rather than [to] hasten it by such means” (Carr 1970, 177–89).

Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938), lacking a base of support, ended up labelled as a “Right deviationist,” was expelled from the CPSU and summarily executed (Bean 1997, 86). Despite this turn of events, Bukharin’s description of the law of motion and the appreciation that is showcased for quantitative to qualitative changes in society, makes *Historical Materialism* (1925) a useful work for the study of China’s rise (Lancaric 2014, 10). Instead of viewing the field of sociology as opposed to Marxist thought, Bukharin sought to merge the two, an approach that would lead to criticism by Gramsci (Lancaric 2014, 6). Yet for Bukharin, historical materialism was “a system of sociology,” which he described as one of the two “important branches [that] consider [...] the entire social life in all its fullness”. As such, sociology serves as a “*method* for history [explaining] the general laws of human evolution [and] the historian must seek and find, in any given epoch, precisely what are the relations [between forms of government and the economy], and must show what is their concrete, specific expression.” Bukharin emphasised the class character of sociology, in which the proletarian variation was decidedly superior because of its understanding that “all is changing” (Bukharin 1925, xii; xiii–xiv).

Since man is not divine but a product of nature, as Bukharin observed, he is subject to its laws. Historical materialism thus sets itself off against theological explanations of man’s position in the world. Here, the law of change, whose constant motion is produced by internal contradictions, is most fundamental. By extension, the constant movement of these forces means that there is an almost perpetual conflict that is only concealed once a “state of rest,” a temporary and exceptional balance is achieved. However, if one of these forces is changed, Bukharin argues, the “internal contradictions” are revealed. The new equilibrium that follows

upon this disturbance emerges on a “new basis”, a “new combination of forces.” Put briefly, “it follows that the ‘conflict’, the contradiction’, [...] the antagonism of forces acting in various directions determines the motion of the system” (Bukharin 1925, 25; 72–74).

While a stable equilibrium is described as an ideal which “does not exist,” unstable equilibria can be either positive or negative. Here, Bukharin gives the example of animals living on a steppe with the amount of food increasing and the number of predators decreasing (or vice versa). It is the development of these contradictions that, according to the theory of the equilibrium here explained, determines historical growth. This decline, prosperity or stagnation of the entire system is determined by the relation it has with its environment it is impossible for “in a growing society [...] for the internal structure of society to constantly grow worse.” The emergence of such a new contradiction would “require the society, if it is to continue growing, to undertake a reconstruction, i.e, its internal structure must adapt itself to the character of the external equilibrium” (Bukharin 1925, 76–79). While Bukharin agrees that “nature makes no sudden jumps,” transitions from quantity into quality can be observed. Indeed, Bukharin notes that one of the fundamental laws in the motion of matter is that “having reached a certain stage in motion, the quantitative changes call forth qualitative changes.” In this regard, it is important to note that the latter allows follows on the former, and not the other way around (Bukharin 1925, 79–83).

## **2. China’s Dialectical Rise from Mao to Xi**

Studies on the historical materialism as pursued by their related socialist parties, trace an evolution “from primitive society to the communist future” and pre-capitalist modes of production, over the development of capitalism, and to the creation of the communist future (Gandy 1979). This evolution showcases the important changes a country can undergo under the leadership of a socialist one-party state. As Nikolai Bukharin observes:

Human society [...] passes through different stages, different forms in its evolution or decline. It follows, in the first place, that we *must consider and investigate each form of society in its own peculiar terms*. [...] We cannot afford to overlook the differences between the Greek slaveholder, the Russian feudal landowner, the capitalist manufacturer. The slaveholding system is one thing; it has its special traits, its earmarks, its special growth. Feudalism is another type; capitalism, a third, etc. And communism – the communism of the future – also has its special structure. [...] Each such system has its special traits that require special study. By this means only, can we grasp the process of change (1925, 69; emphasis in original).

This quote is useful for its appreciation of the changing conditions, or the transformations from a quantitative state to a qualitative one. Indeed, building on the aforementioned change to a new basis or a new combination of forces, the theory of historical materialism offers explanatory value for the changing conditions of China's rise. This process is perhaps best described by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin who argued that one ought to understand such a development not as "progress but [as] actualization." Rather than viewing a temporal continuity between past, present and future, "time is [here] differentiated solely by the differences between the events that occur within it" (quoted in Stanford 2015). In what follows, an investigation will be put forward that seeks to understand how Bukharin's theory of historical materialism was picked up as part of the initial years under Mao Zedong. This period can be understood as pre-rising China.

### Mao Zedong's Sinification of Marxism

The haphazard availability of Marxist writings in 1920s China is reflected in the fact that "soldiers, officers included, [had] no notion of what Marxism was." This knowledge was the "privilege of political commissars [(Party representatives in the army)] and of a limited number of high-ranking officers" and only studied seriously and in its Stalinist-Maoist form (Ládany 2018, 509–13) during the Yan'an period (Selden 1995), following one of the most important events in the history of pre-1949 socialist China. As László Ladány describes:

"The economic theses of Marx – accumulation of wealth, impoverishment of the proletariat, exploitation – were rarely mentioned. The state was the only employer. What resulted was state ownership of all means of

production. All economic power was concentrated in the hands of the leaders [...] In grim fact, Marxism meant the unlimited rule of the Party, including strict control of thoughts and words” (Ládany 2018, 511).

The Soviet-Russian filter through which Marxism entered China emphasises a Leninism-Stalinist system which is characterised by “a cluster of organizational and strategic directives useful for seizing power and holding it dictatorially” (Wittfogel 1951, 23). What emerged in China as a result was a Marxism in its “closed, compact, Stalinist form” which replaced an understanding created by the Chinese philosophies and Buddhism of the world and society based on “a social consensus of harmony and a spontaneous acceptance of an ethical code [replacing] social values, gracious courtesy and respect [...] with the crude Stalinist practice of mutual denunciation, class hatred [and] recurring political campaigns” (Ládany 2018, 510).

Behind Mao’s successful introduction of Marxism into China, Ládany goes on to describe, lies his ability to “express Marxist categories in Chinese terms” (2018, 63). This philosophical and discursive merging of the two traditions, or the Sinification of Marxism [马克思主义中国化], assumes that “certain of Marx’s cosmological assumptions, in contrast to those of the main Western categories, [were] more capable of being understood and Sinicized in terms of particular philosophical currents in the Chinese traditions” (C. Tian 2019). What emerged was a distinctly Chinese understanding of Marxism that contributed to China’s ideological independence from the Western Marxism and its main proponent, the Soviet Union. While it is argued that differences in reasoning exist because of their development within different cultural backgrounds (Holubnychy 1964, 4-5; see also Nisbett 2011), this chapter is more interested in how these discrepancies have given Marxism its universal character – or indeed, Maoism as a variation on Marxism in its own right (Holubnychy 1964, 3). Most important in this regard is Chinese dialectics [辩证法], a form of correlative reasoning that is reflected in such concepts as the ‘way’ [道], ‘change’ [易], ‘yin-yang’ [阴阳], and as Tian

argues, the construct of ‘continuity through change’ [通变] (2019, 15-18; 2004). A great paradox is of course located in the socialist endeavour to replace the traditional thought systems in China, while introducing the Marxist one by way of these traditional concepts (Heubel 2019).

Following Bukharin’s observations on the evolution “from primitive society to the communist future” (see above), it was Mao who in his 1939 speech on “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party” described China between 1840 and 1911 as a ‘semi-colonial and semi-feudal society’ [半殖民地半封建的社会] as a result of foreign aims to transform China in one such society and exploit the country through a variety of means. As Mao recounted, the country’s long feudal history came to an end not only through the development of a commodity economy, but more importantly after wars of aggression initiated by those foreign states led to the signing of unequal treaties and the subsequent relinquishing of all of China’s important trading ports. This situation was exacerbated by the foreign dominance in the country’s light and heavy industries and the banking and finance sectors (Mao 1939; see also Kataoka 1974; Foot 2019).

This interpretation of Chinese traditional society, earmarked by its agrarian character and a peasantry living under serfdom (B. Dessein 2014; Fie 1992), as evolving from a feudal to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society is “absurd,” Karl Wittfogel argued in a sharp critique, and testament to the “lip service to, but actual rejection of, Marx” (1951, 22; 24). Indeed, framing the issue in this way “proved extremely useful to the Chinese Communists [as the] insistence on the ‘feudal’ quality of Chinese society permitted a maximal stress on the land problem [(a grave but secondary issue for the Nationalist KMT)] (Wittfogel 1951, 24). The attack on the ‘feudal’ landlords built up mass support for an agrarian revolution, while it discreetly hid the ultimate (bureaucratic) beneficiaries of the Communist-induced civil war” (Wittfogel 1951, 24).

## Dialectical Progress from Mao to Deng

For China, the remaking of China under Mao (Mühlhahn 2019, 353-486) presented an important break in history over the period between 1949 and 1955 that was consolidated further during the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, political campaigns launched between 1956 and 1976. It was only after this tumultuous period that China's modernisation started to be defined as its end-goal and its rise really took off (Mühlhahn 2019, 353-496). Indeed, the early form of Maoism eventually shifted its focus from revolution towards the modernisation of China (Pfeffer 1976, 438-440) which would arguably render the Marxist theory of historical materialism the essence behind China's rise and socialist modernisation. In this regard, the importance of historical dialectics to study the rise of China and the great explanatory value that is captured herein cannot be understated.

Mao demonstrated his penchant for dialectical materialism as early as 1937 in a series of lectures delivered at the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political University titled "On Practice" [实践论] (1937b) and "On Contradiction" [矛盾论] (1937a; Ládany 2018, 80-101). The latter concept was further developed in "On the Correct Handling of the Contradictions Among the People" [关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题] (Mao 1957). While Mao's "Bukharinist phase" (Kalain 1984) came to an end with the Great Leap Forward, during which the idea of permanent revolution [不断革命] gained preference over the gradualism espoused by historical materialism (Schram 1971), it is argued that Mao initially echoed many of the ideas written down by Nikolai Bukharin (see above). An important connection between Bukharin and Mao Zedong is visible in his speech "On the Ten Great Relationships" [论十大关系] (1956a). In this speech, Mao laid out his vision for the country's economy, the speech also signalled his departure from the Soviet model of building socialism.

However, R. Kalain observes that the ideas discussed in this “important contribution to the idea of planned socialist economic growth” (notably the “notion of agriculture, light industry and then heavy industry”) never came into practice (1984, 147). Other important speeches from this period include “Notes from the Socialist Upsurge in China’s Countryside” [中国农村的社会主义高潮的按语] (1955a); “On the Correct Handling” (1957); and the “Debate on the Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture and the Current Class Struggle” [农业合作化的一场辩论和当前的阶级斗争] (1955b). Mao Zedong’s speech “Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions” [增强党的团结，继承党的传统] (1956b) is a good example to discuss the connection with Bukharin’s historical materialism.

We have some fifty to sixty years to overtake [the United States], that is our duty. You are so numerous, you have such a vast territory and your resources are abundant, and you are said to be building socialism which is presumably superior. If after fifty or sixty years, you still have not been able to overtake the United States, what will that make you look like? You would have to rid yourself off the face of the Earth! For this reason, it is not only possible but absolutely necessary and obligatory to overtake the United States. If we do not do so, the Chinese nation will be letting down each nation of the world and our contribution to mankind will not be big (Mao 1956b).

In this speech, William Callahan explains, Mao measures a country’s greatness according to the tonnage of steel that it produces. While this emphasis arguably created the imbalance that occurred during the Great Leap Forward, today there is again the assumption that as China becomes the biggest economy, it ought to take on the role of political leadership in the world (2015, 4-19). As it stands, this rationale follows the logic of historical materialism that quantitative improvements bring about qualitative change. In other words, it is expected that the size of China’s economy will validate its system build on a socialist platform.

Whereas Mao initially envisioned over half a century to overtake the United States, the “euphoric summer of 1958,” as Roderick Macfarquhar notes, “clearly shortened his time-scale drastically” (MacFarquhar, 1983 in Shen, Zhihua; Xia 2011, 866). Mao argued that China during the late 1950s had found not only the right solution to realise communism but also that

in doing so, the country would be able to overtake the United Kingdom in two to three years, followed by the Soviet Union in about five years and finally, the United States within ten (Mao in Shen, Zhihua; Xia 2011, 866). Indeed, the Great Leap Forward promoted the idea that China would be able to transition from socialism to communism in a “more comprehensive, quicker and more effective” way than the Soviet Union did (Mao 1958 in Shen, Zhihua; Xia 2011, 861-868). China would do so through the People’s Commune Movement [人民公社化运动] which would be able to “push forward a great leap, further propelling China towards communism” (Shen, Zhihua; Xia 2011, 867). It is important to understand these developments within the context of the Sino-Soviet Split, which will be explored in the next chapter. This period saw the Soviet Union gradually cooling down over the idea of the People’s Commune Movement.

After that fateful jump into the depths of human disaster, Mao’s opponents in the Party, Bo Yibo, Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yun, would again seek to apply “Bukharinism in the practice of Chinese economic planning from 1960 until the Cultural Revolution” (1966-1976) and it was again Chen Yun who in 1978 set into motion “the movement of resources into light industry and agriculture, and an actual slow-down in the growth of steel, coal, machine-building and other parts of the heavy industry sector.” Mao’s successors since 1983 favour “a pro-peasant policy [and] a ‘balanced growth’ model as a reaction against Mao’s (and their own) unbalanced growth pattern” (Kalain 1984, 147-151). To appreciate the historical materialism within China’s rise it is important to see the impact of the post-1978 reform period in China and trace its origins back to that early period under Mao Zedong, which in turn, echoed the theory of historical materialism of Nikolai Bukharin. Most important here is Mao’s critique on the Soviet model and his promotion of an alternative, Chinese model of development (Kalain 1984, 147-148). Furthermore, the reformist period initiated by Deng Xiaoping again harked back to the



industrialisation debate of the 1920s in the Soviet Union which had proven to be Bukharin's demise.

The latter's re-emergence into the Chinese public debate in the 1980s presented a useful testimony for the "transition to socialism via market relations and commodities" through the author's theoretical connection to Lenin and his emphasis on the continued dictatorship of the proletariat (J. D. White 1991, 736). These historical developments demonstrate that it is possible to interpret China's rise according to Bukharin's theory of historical materialism. The Soviet Twenties are an interesting analogy with which one can approach today's China. The New Economic Policy (NEP) espoused by Lenin and Stalin yet perceived by many to be a retreat to capitalism (see above), solidified the authoritarian control in the hands of the then-ruling Communist Party amid a global retreat of communism following the First World War and the Russian Civil War. Instead, Stalin choose to follow the idea of establishing "socialism in one country," a policy which effectively restricted the communist goal to the national borders. Its proletarian focus, however, remained in the development of heavy industry (Carr 1970, 139). This shift itself is an interesting query (see for example Himmer 1994) for its explanatory value to the policies pushed forward by Mao Zedong just a few decades later.

Mao's 1956 speech to "Strengthen Party Unity" (see above) explicitly referred to the aim of surpassing the West on an industrial level and the pursuit of international esteem. However, the disastrous GLF that ensued (itself in essence an attempt to surpass Britain within fifteen years through rapid collectivisation in one great leap from socialism to communism), and the CR that followed, would have a profound impact on the international character of Mao's China, which similarly to the U.S.S.R under Stalin would move away from the international movement of workers and peasants envisioned by the communist ideal. Comparing the policies pursued by the USSR during the 1920s and its impact on what has been called Mao's early

Bukharinist phase with the current period under Xi Jinping, is here interesting for the presumed “Maoist revival” that is ongoing (see Minzner 2018; Blanchette 2019, 248-261). Captured within this (temporary) move away from the goal of spreading communism across the globe, there is a persistent trend towards building socialism at home before going abroad.

An interesting nuance is attributed to Nikita Khrushchev who had predicted that “in the place of the dream of communist internationalism would come, at best, a series of national socialisms” (quoted in Kirby 2006, 890). Following E.H. Carr’s study of the Soviet Union’s creation of “socialism in one country,” this research of China’s ideology takes place against the backdrop of trends within the country’s economic development, a choice of arrangement that has taken precedent over other, perhaps more dramatic issues such as rivalries within the CCP or deployments of the country’s vast military apparatus (Carr 1970, 5). In so doing, the Chinese one-party system and its endeavour of ‘restoring China,’ rather than the domestic and international class struggles, is put forward as the main agent of this ideology demonstrating the connection between Marxism and Leninism, or how the ideological character of the Leninist Party-state is a decisive element for analysis. Coupled with the theme of this thesis, it is interesting to ask whether this situation is similar to the period after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Chinese presumed shift from ideology to pragmatism under Deng Xiaoping.

In this light, Deng’s reform period that started in 1978 can best be described as a revolution away from the Maoist totalitarianism, and towards authoritarianism (Ládany 2018, 511-512). As argued above, the reinstatement of Bukharin’s historical materialism allowed the Chinese leadership to, as Ady Van den Stock argues, *de facto* abandon socialism by stressing the “primordial importance of praxis, [...] by appealing to the supposed principles of those political ideologies in order to justify the practical abandonment of precisely these very same ideologies” (2014, 28). However, that is not to say that China under Deng moved away from

its ideology completely. Indeed, the pragmatism displayed here has been described as anything but value-neutral and ideology-free (Pye 1988, 75; Ringen 2016, 57). With the goal of socialist modernisation, the CCP under Deng Xiaoping instead displayed a philosophy of political gradualism, as was also advocated by Nikolai Bukharin (Cohen 1970, 54). In doing so, ample room was opened for economic reforms within the rigid political framework of the one-party state.

That the emphasis would come to lie specifically with economic reform and opening-up is clear with the definition of a new ‘principal contradiction in society’ [社会主要矛盾]. This concept, developed in Mao’s “On Contradiction” points to the fact that in the development of complex matters, the principal contradiction decides and effects the development of other contradictions (Mao 1937a). This principal contradiction refers to specific situations at any given time (Ládany 2018, 93). In 1981, the principal contradiction was redefined as being situated between the “increasing material and cultural needs of the people and lagging social production” [人民日益增长的物质文化需要同落后的社会生产之间] (Godbole 2017). It is within this context that one ought to place the creation of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics.’ In their analysis of the primary stage of socialism, Hu Angang and Zhang Wei of Tsinghua University offer an interesting analysis of the PRC’s history between 1949 to and 2000 and again from 2001 to 2050. Respectively, these five phases trace the evolution from the level of absolute poverty [绝对贫困]; the availability of adequate food and clothing [温饱阶段] to the creation well-off society [小康水平]. Between 2001 and 2020 there follows the establishment of an overall well-off society [全面小康], followed by the attainment of the level of common prosperity [共同富裕] in 2050 (Hu, Angang; Zhang 2017, 14).

表 1 社会主义初级阶段的划分

社会主义 初级阶段	“上半场”	第一阶段:绝对贫困	1949—1978
		第二阶段:温饱阶段	1978—1990
		第三阶段:小康水平	1991—2000
	“下半场”	第一阶段:全面小康	2001—2020
		第二阶段:共同富裕	2021—2050

**Image 3.** A schematic representation of the primary stage of socialism (Hu, Angang; Zhang 2017, 14).

This table is interesting as it traces the socialist modernisation of China since 1949 without linking it to any one generation of the CCP’s leadership, providing a clear overview of the history and future development of the PRC through the different phases China’s rise has gone through.

表 1 社会主要矛盾演进与三次飞跃发展逻辑结构图							
时间	1921—1949 年	1949—1956 年		1956—1978 年		1978—2012 年	2012 年至今
时期	新民主主义革命时期	社会主义过渡时期		社会主义建设时期		改革开放新时期	中国特色社会主义新时代
社会主要矛盾	民族矛盾 阶级矛盾	民族矛盾 阶级矛盾	工人阶级与 资产阶级	工业国与农业 国、需要与不 能满足需要	两条道路 两个阶级	物质文化需要同 落后的社会生产	美好生活需要 和不平衡不充分的发展
总路线 (基本路线)	新民主主义 革命总路线	党在过渡时期总路线 (一化三改)		社会主义建 设总路线 (多快好省)	社会主义历史 阶段总路线 (以阶级斗 争为纲)	社会主义初级阶段基本路线 (一个中心,两个基本点)	
目标	站起来			富起来			强起来
分期	艰难探索	客观定位		偏离摇摆		回归扬弃	理论突破

**Image 4.** A schematic representation of the three ‘great leaps’ in China’s rise between 1949 and the present. Note that these leaps are here presented as overall objectives [目标], an umbrella term bringing together the period of time [时间] and its respective period [时期], the major contradiction in society, the general or basic line [总路线 or 基本路线] and phasal differentiation [分期] (Zhou, Xianxin; Xu 2019, 8).

A more detailed approach as visible in Image 3 identifies the three great leaps [伟大飞跃] discussed by Xi Jinping during the 19<sup>th</sup> NPC. The identified time periods and their respective contradiction and basic line in this table are: the ‘New Democratic Revolution’ [新民主主义

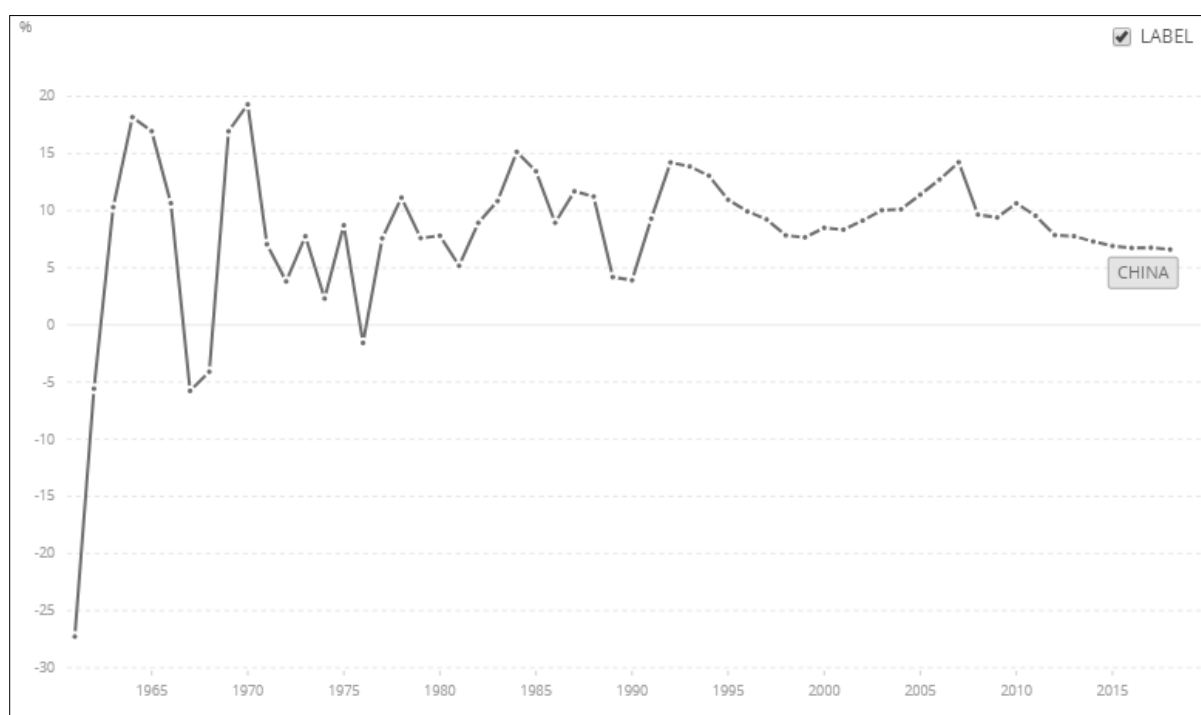
革命时期] of 1921-1949 with its contradictions between the ethnic groups [民族] and (social) classes [阶级]; the transitory period of building socialism [社会主义过渡时期] between 1949-1956 and the shift to the contradiction between the workers and the bourgeoisie. Between 1956 and 1978 there is the period of building socialism [社会主义建设时期] with the contradictions between the industrial and agricultural sectors; between the needs of the people and the inability to satisfy these; and between the two roads [两条道路] and classes [两个阶级 (referring to the roads of capitalism or socialism, and the classes of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, respectively)]. Entering the Deng era there is the abovementioned period of reform and opening-up, which was followed by the new era under Xi Jinping (Zhou, Xianxin; Xu 2019, 5–11).

The aforementioned leaps range from the standing up [站起来] of China under Mao Zedong, it getting rich [富起来], or material enrichment (K. Brown 2017b, 3), under Deng Xiaoping and finally, getting strong [强起来] under Xi Jinping (Xi 2017). It is partially inspired by this expression that authors have described Xi's China as undergoing the “third revolution” in PRC history (Leonard 2012; Economy 2018). Indeed, these goals set by the Chinese leadership at different moments in time act as milestones and showcase the “historical logic [历史逻辑] of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (Zhou, Xianxin; Xu 2019, 5). In many ways, Xi also presents the end of an era (Minzner 2018), as the reversal of many of Deng's policies in both the political-organisational and economic spheres demonstrate (S. Lee 2017).

### **Dialectical Progress under Xi Jinping**

As could be expected from a new era in China's rise, Xi Jinping in 2017 redefined the principal contradiction in society to now consist of the ever-growing needs of the people for a better livelihood and the country's uneven and inadequate development [人民日益增长的美好生活

需要和不平衡不充分的发展之间] (Xi 2017). The quinquennial NPC of 2017 lauded in a ‘new era for socialism with Chinese characteristics’ (see above) in which the emphasis of the Chinese economy would shift from the former high-speed growth phase [高速增长阶段] to one of high-quality [高质量发展阶段] (Xi 2017), in line with the new objective of power consolidation. This assertion formally endorsed the ‘new normal of economic growth’ [经济发展新常态] (Holbig 2018), announced in 2013 to describe the slowdown of China’s economic slowdown that started around 2010 (see Image 4).



**Image 5.** China’s GDP growth (annual %) between 1961 and 2018 (World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=CN>).

As Xi asserted, the definition of a new principal contradiction would bring new requirements to the work of both Party and state for the continuation of the country’s development but with the recognition that status of China as a developing country during what it calls the primary stage of socialism remains unchanged. Xi urged the country to strife forward

in order to realise the socialist modernisation and deliver a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilised and beautiful socialist China [把我国建设成为富强民主文明和谐美丽的社会主义现代化强国而奋斗] (Xi 2017). It is a period of critical transition for the CCP (K. Brown 2017a), in a move away from an economy of labourers and farmers (the low labour costs of whom gave China its competitive edge) to a high-tech economy (Dessein in Zuallaert 2018). This New Normal, Coppens argues, is not normal at all for China continues to contribute an important share to the world economy (Coppens 2019, 22; see also Economy 2018, 91; McMahon 2018, 191).

In August 2018, the People's Daily published a teleology of the reform and opening-up period [改革开放天地宽] that started four decades earlier. Lauding the growing strengths in science and technology [科技实力], the country's innovation capabilities [创新能力] and the Chinese 'spirit of innovation' [创新精神], the article observed that through this reform and opening-up, China was able to "take historical leaps from an impoverished state to one of moderate prosperity" [从贫困到小康的历史性跨越]. Furthermore, to continue its development the document notes, the country ought to "grasp the logic of historical advancement" [把握历史前进的逻辑中前进] and the "natural law of change encapsulated in the classic formulation" [变者，天道也]. Just as in the past, this experience would prove to be successful in the present and in the future, as a correct road to power and prosperity. While bringing might and fortunes to China, so too would the Chinese experience present an alternative development choice for other nations, thereby changing the Western example from the "only one" to becoming "one of" (Xuanyan 2018).

Under Xi, the article concludes, China is "comprehensively deepening reform" [全面深化改革]. These 'Four Comprehensives' [四个全面] policy, or the 'Four-Pronged Strategy'

[四个全面战略布局], is closely connected to the Xi Jinping era and include comprehensively deepening reform, building a moderately prosperous society, governing the nation according to law, and strictly governing the party (Brown; Bērziņa-Čerenkova 2018, 7–8). In keeping with the above, under Xi the previous policy of reform and opening-up is continued under the header of ‘reform, development and stability’ [改革发展稳定]. Arguably, reform now even precedes opening-up (Thomas 2019b).

Moreover, during this contemporary transformation of the Chinese economy, the emphasis is on development rather than opening-up and makes reference to the age-old political logic of the CCP of stability through control or stability maintenance [维护稳定] (Zuallaert 2018; Khan 2018). An important question asks whether the socialist rising power China can bridge the middle-income trap on a decidedly socialist basis, thereby indeed providing an alternative to the normative development model of the West. An important example are Xi Jinping’s repeated calls for self-reliance [自力更生] in the fields of science and technology (Thomas 2019a). As mentioned above, there is a growing urgency to fulfil the country’s rejuvenation during (or despite) the slowdown of its economic growth. This expressed through return of a more explicit nationalism and the connection between the CCP’s leadership and the modernisation of China. Xi for example noted: “without the leadership of the Party, national rejuvenation will inevitably remain an empty dream” [没有中国共产党的领导，民族复兴必然是空想] (Xi 2017).

Kerry Brown explains: since its inception, the CCP took on the “role of a potential saviour,” appealing to “a very specific frustration that Chinese people experienced with their own history,” thereby perceiving its “feudal, Confucian, imperial and highly-conservative past [...] as a prison. Leaving these shackles behind, the CCP’s promise of a positive future “with a good outcome” gave it a mandate to modernise the country on its own accord (K. Brown 2018c,



22–23; 68). This mood is captured perfectly in Francis Spufford’s *Red Plenty* (2010), in which the author compares the future as envisioned by the socialist revolution to fairy tales and images of endless feasts and the abundance that was to be delivered through the Soviet Union’s planned economy. This red promise aimed at beating capitalism “on its own terms” and to make the Soviet citizens the richest people in the world (Spufford 2010, 3–6). One could argue that this optimism stands in opposition to the more own interpretation of the future in the West which is far more tragi-laden and envisions a hegemonic clash and its own eventual downfall. What follows as a result is that the CCP’s legitimacy is based on much more than the provision of steady economic growth (see J. Zeng 2014; Spufford 2010).

However, Evan Feigenbaum notes that a certain “fragility and uncertainty about the *non*-material aspects of governance and development lies behind the Leninist triumphalism” (Feigenbaum 2017). The socioeconomic problems that came about as a result of that previous period of rapid economic growth and the political challenges that these present for the CCP are important to consider. Specifically, it is for the CCP to provide a cleaner (less corrupt), more adaptative (to social demands) and responsive governance while being unrepresentative of its population. It is furthermore necessary to note that one cannot reduce the position of the Party to the material (economic and military) dimension of China’s rise. China’s economic boom was not followed by the development of a “basic infrastructure of trust.” Here, the close-knit society of old is transformed in a society where “everyone is a stranger” (K. Brown 2017b, 41) Indeed, the first part of the new contradiction (the demands of the people for a better livelihood) is important to understand China under Xi. In this regard, Kerry Brown notes that this China draw much more on assertive and prominent articulations of its nationalism (K. Brown 2018c). Xi Jinping described it as follows: “culture is the soul of a people and of a nation. It is moving and it is strong. Without cultural self-confidence, and without its prosperity, there can be no great

rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Xi 2017). Note that what is talked about here is fundamentally China's socialist culture [社会主义文化]:

Socialist culture with Chinese characteristics is originated in the five-thousand year-long history of the Chinese people and the outstanding traditional it produced. [It is] embedded in the revolutionary [and] socialist culture created under the Party's leadership of the people in revolution, construction and reform; and is rooted in the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. To develop a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics is to take Marxism as its guide [...] to develop a socialist culture that is oriented towards modernisation, the world [and] the future. [It is] to promote the harmonious development of socialist spiritual and material culture (Xi 2017).

From this statement, it becomes clear that rejuvenation is as much a material goal, as it is a moral obligation in the context of China's rise. The statement above thus presents a good example of the CCP's messianic goal of restoring the country to greatness and casts its ideology "along the lines of dogma or doctrine in a religious context" (K. Brown 2019; 2018c, 92). Such almost spiritual belief in the socialist system does not mean that China's is not a secular Marxism but the result of putting forward a national(ist) objective through socialist means. It also means that rejuvenation, to the CCP, does not so much "evokes memories of the country as the Middle Kingdom demanding tribute from the rest of the world" (K. Huang 2022) but refers to the continuation of central Party rule as it currently exists. China's imperial restoration may then very well be true, but it will under a very different guise.

### **3. Applying Historical Materialism to China's Rise**

And yet one of the central debates in the literature on China's rise is that of the country's increasing assertiveness. Indeed, the low-profile approach of *Taoguang yanghui* [韬光养晦] espoused by the Chinese statesman Deng Xiaoping in 1991 is said to be increasingly evolving towards a more proactive and aggressive approach. More specifically, this is part of a bigger strategy urging the country to 'make cool observations' [冷静观察], 'secure our position' [稳住阵脚], 'cope with affairs calmly' [沉着应付], 'conceal our capacities and bide our time,' 'never claim leadership' [决不当头], and so forth (Wang 2002; Shen 2007). While Deng urged

China to continue its rising path to power while biding its time, Xi is said to now be “striving for achievement” [奋发有为] (Chen; Wang 2011; X. Yan 2014; Sørensen 2015; Kawashima 2019; F. Liu 2020). Pillsbury goes as far as to say that these ancient strategic maxims such as this *taoguang yanghui* are consciously applied by the modern Chinese state (2016: 31-51; see also Blanchette 2015; Johnston 2019). This perceived shift in the Chinese leadership’s temporal understanding of China’s rise suffers from two deficiencies. In a reflection of the wider debate on China’s rise, China’s growing assertiveness under Xi Jinping has become somewhat of a trope. It persists as a basic building block for the broader argument that is made in a variety of studies. Subsequently, it serves to illuminate the phenomenon of China’s increased presence internationally without actually explaining what is going on (Xu, Jin; Du 2015). Similarly, such a shift from Deng to Xi skims over the periods under Chinese Presidents Jiang Zemin (1993-2003) and Hu Jintao (2003-2013), elevating Deng’s maxims to an enduring element of Chinese foreign policy between 1991 and 2013. Two years after the military crackdown on the Tiananmen protests of 1989, what Deng Xiaoping envisioned at the time was not so much a renunciation of national grandeur but rather a call for patience while China was growing its economy (Shen 2007, 47-48).

### **The Dialectics of China’s Growing Assertiveness**

With the economy taking centre stage after the end of the 1970s, Deng Xiaoping’s call for patience following the infamous military intervention at Tiananmen Square has been described as ‘Taoist Nationalism.’ A concept refers to the preference to “[maximise] national security in a cooperative (or even concessive), isolationist and self-strengthening manner.” Loaned from Peking University’s Wang Fuchun, it also demonstrates a connection between Deng Xiaoping’s advice and classical Taoist thought. It is worth mentioning that Simon Shen analyses the

strategic maxims behind Chinese foreign policy against the backdrop of the Belgrade Embassy bombing (1999); the spy-plane collision accident (2001); the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan (2001); and the war in Iraq (2003), particularly with reference to the influence of these events on spurring Chinese nationalism. This perspective, on fairly recent events, offer an interesting nuance to the trope of the century of humiliation (F. Wang 2002; Shen 2007, 47-48). However, the weak points of the dictum were as a result of its abiding nature, the lack of a clear time frame as well as the unclear system of communicating this low-profile approach to China's rise. Particularly concerning the former point, Chinese nationalists urged that "there should not be unlimited concessions" on the part of the Chinese state. Indeed, while the development ideal was widely shared, so too was the general impatience with this posture of biding time (Shen 2007, 97-100).

As a result, by the end of the period under Jiang Zemin the idiom was changed to what can be described as 'Guiguzi Nationalism' and is best characterised by Jiang's idioms of "making cool observations" [冷静观察], "dealing with the situations calmly" [沉着应对], "grasping opportunities" [把握机遇] and "making best use of the situation" [因势利导]. More concretely, Jiang urged that China was to take "advantage of a situation created by others instead of creating the situation directly" (Shen 2007, 110-113). As Christopher Ford notes, the logic behind this assertion was simple: "China's return required development, and development required time, a peaceful environment, and international cooperation" (2015a, 198). However, one clear message that is contained within these 'diplomatic guidelines' [外交方针] is particularly that third element of "grasping opportunities" at the right moments in time. Here, it is important to explicitly connect the concept of 'periods of opportunity' [机遇期] with those aforementioned guidelines. Defined through the Chinese leadership's analysis of threat and opportunity, this concept figures as a heuristic device to explain shifts in China's foreign

policy behaviour. As Lucian Pye observes: “extreme shifts in Chinese foreign policy, which always represent fine calculations of China’s national interests, stand as testimony to the Chinese sense of reality, unaffected by sentimentality, and to their keen understanding of the current play of power in world affairs. When Chinese analysts describe the state of world politics, the picture they give is extraordinarily mechanistic and reflects the belief that geopolitical reality can be measured with exact scientific precision – this superpower is now on the ‘offensive,’ that superpower is on the ‘defensive,’ these forces are on the ‘ascendency’” (Pye 1988, 85).

It was Jiang Zemin who in his final speech to the 16<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress of China in 2002 lauded the beginning of an “important period of strategic opportunity” in which China would be able “to accomplish great things” [大有作为的重要战略机遇期] over the next two decades (Jiang 2012). His successor Hu Jintao in turn would see the introduction of the concept of China’s ‘peaceful rise/development’ (B. Zheng 2013), as much a rebuke to the emergent China threat theory [中国威胁论] as it was a compromise with those more ardent voices within the country that called for increasing assertiveness (Shen 2007, 186-187).

The connection between these ‘periods of opportunity’ and their accompanying guidelines is much more explicitly present in studies of China’s military strategy, or what the country describes as the ‘strategic guidelines’ [战略方针] of the armed forces (Shou 2013; Fravel 2019, 1). Here, the concept is influenced in large part by the military changes in the international environment following the end of the Cold War. Particularly the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) figures prominently in this regard. Examples include the definition of “local wars under high-technology conditions” [高技术条件下的局部战争] in 1993 (Fravel 2019, 182-216), “local wars under conditions of informatisation” [信息化条件下局部战争] in 2004 (Fravel 2019, 217-230) and more recently again “informationised local wars” [信息化局

部战争] (Fravel 2019, 230-235). Within this context, Simon Shen notes that “single week of 9/11 [as] one of the most dramatic U-turns in Chinese diplomatic history.” Indeed, particularly the downfall of Saddam Hussain would demonstrate to China the necessity of upgrading the country’s arsenal (Shen 2007, 104; ).

Seemingly reverting back towards that earlier precept of *taoguang yanghui* of the Deng Xiaoping era (a concept that quite literally translated would mean something as “hide brightness and nourish obscurity”), it is interesting to see that rather than biding its time, China was in that period rather more focused on the second arm of Deng’s stratagem: to hide its capabilities (Shen 2007). Others have demonstrated that this shift is not as clear cut and China needs to be able to tap into both the more assertive, as well as the more passive strands of its foreign policy (J. Liu 2019), particularly since China has seen an impressive growth in its capabilities since the 1990s. Following upon this point, Qin Yaqing argues, while the country ought to continue in a rather subtle manner when it comes to Chinese strategy as a whole, changes in its attitude are increasingly visible in the country’s defence of its national interests (Qin 2014). Similarly, an over-emphasis on the earlier described form of Taoist nationalism risks misrepresenting China as a passive actor (Shen 2007) following the Taoist “thought of naturally doing nothing” [*ziran wuwei sixiang* 自然无为的思想] (F. Wang 2002). In a quite explicit contrast indeed, it is important to note once again the evolution from “doing some things” under Deng to “accomplishing great things” under Jiang and increasingly “striving for achievements” under Xi.

### **Dialectic Temporality in China’s Rise**

Contained within the preceding paragraphs is the confluence of Chinese intentions and capabilities that, by echoing the title of this thesis, is reflected in a Chinese Party-state that is increasingly moving from aspiration to actuality in the pursuit of its goals. It is in this regard

that the developments that struck the West over the past decade, and especially the economic crisis of 2007-2008 and the political turmoil of 2016, offer important lessons. Initially put forward as proof of Western (and particularly American) decline as being “palpably imminent” in terms of “economic collapse, political paralysis, and geopolitical decline” (Ford 2015a, 331; 338), it seems that the Chinese leadership gravely overestimated these trends. Rather than generating a giant leap in prestige (Womack 2017, 389), then, it has become clear that the singular event of the Trump election (Ferguson 2018) and the more general backlash coming from the West (McGregor 2019; Rolland 2019) has led to a premature and simmering finale for the country’s ‘period of strategic opportunity’ that it had been enjoying for over a decade.

The literature on rising powers and particularly the rise of China suggests that any given time frame fundamentally impacts the range of policy-choices that a state can take. It does so under the influence of nationalistic elements within that state and the loss of legitimacy that the (in)ability to confront new situations might generate. Similarly, a premature self-assertion and the risk of having come out of low-profile behaviour too early, “either by one’s own miscalculation or manipulation by others” (Ford 2015a, 481) as presumably happened during this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can have important consequences for any assessments of the country’s decision-making process by itself or by others. For this reason, the Central Foreign Policy Work Conference [中央外事工作会议] of 2018 merits attention. During the conference’s first iteration since 2014, Xi repeated his statement made during the 19<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress one year earlier that a ‘period of historic transition’ [历史交汇期] between 2017 and 2021 had set in (Xi 2018).

Indeed, with the new definition of China as a ‘great-power competitor’ by the US (Trump 2017; DoD 2018), the year 2017 presented a reckoning with China’s rise that took shape in the ongoing trade war (Ferguson 2018; Bew 2019), a development that has been

interpreted as the beginning of a new Cold War (Ferguson 2019; Shiffrinson 2019). The validity of such historical analogies notwithstanding, it is interesting to perceive of this trade conflict as part of the wider strategic competition between the US and China, a relationship that is increasingly characterised by the act of ‘economic and strategic decoupling’ [经济与战略脱钩] (Wang, You; Chen 2018).

The Belt and Road Initiative offers an interesting illustration to this point of a more general trend of backlash against China’s rise. Nadège Rolland argues that the international backlash to the BRI was largely based on a “negative reading of Beijing’s geostrategic motives” (2019, 12). That there exists a feedback loop that allows the Chinese polity to anticipate, assess and adapt its policies is made evident by the signalled shift “from ‘broad brushstrokes’ to ‘detailed planning’” [从“大写意”到“工笔画”] (Rolland 2019), following comments made by Xi Jinping at the conference for the promotion of the BRI in 2019 (Xi 2019a).

Yuen Yuen Ang traces the current hysteria back to the policy campaigns of the Chinese state, which essentially puts forward a grand vision that is left to the top-down policy-making process of mass mobilisation and subsequent recalibration. A certain sense of adaptability is indeed present within the Chinese-style of policy experimentation, which puts forward model experiences [典型经验] (2017b). This approach allows for “adaptability to shifting circumstances and therefore government stability,” as Courtney Fung argues in her study of the evolving Chinese approach to UN Peacekeeping (Fung 2019a, 511–15). It is clear in such analyses of the Chinese feedback-mechanism, whether described in a dry or a rather more literary manner, there is an inherent phased approach that is indicative of the historical materialist tradition behind China’s rise more generally. To appreciate the historical materialism that guides the Chinese decision-making process, it is important to understand how the country understands its position in what it calls the ‘two internal and external big situations’



[国内国际两个大局] (Finkelstein 2019, 49; Yue 2019). Similarly, the way in which the given ‘period of opportunity’ is defined in relation to very contemporary developments in both the internal and external spheres of China’s rise, suggests that this ascendancy is not predestined but is contingent on the opportunities and challenges that occur at any given time.

Referring back to the aforementioned similarity between the countries ‘strategic’ and ‘diplomatic guidelines,’ China’s most recent Defence White Paper [军事战略白皮书] of 2019 also point to an interesting shift in the more general understanding of changes in the international environment, particularly when compared to the one released in 2015:

With a generally favourable external environment, China will remain in an important period of strategic opportunities for its development, a period in which much can be achieved (SCIO 2015).

China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development. Nevertheless, it also faces diverse and complex security threats and challenges (SCIO 2019).

China’s rise seems to exist on two planes, one in theory and one in how it develops in practice, allowing for a high degree of adaptability to changing circumstances. Nevertheless, it needs emphasising that these changes take place within a strict vision of the future. It is for this reason that under Xi, it is simultaneously argued that after this transitory period (itself forming the conclusion to that earlier period of strategic opportunity), a “period of historic opportunity in which much can be done” [大有可为历史机遇期] is soon to commence and will see China’s great rejuvenation to be realised by the year 2050 (see also A. Dessein 2019).

As such, and to answer the question that asks whether China has risen or if it is still rising (Breslin 2017), it is interesting to note the discrepancy between the years 2021 and 2050 that is envisioned in the end-goal of China’s great rejuvenation that characterises its rise. Perhaps the currently most important temporal outlook by the Chinese leadership is coined in the concept of the ‘two centennial goals of struggle’ [两个一百年奋斗目标]. Indeed, the goals

of building a ‘moderately well-off society’ and of becoming a ‘great power under socialist modernisation’ respectively refer to the hundredth-year anniversaries of the CCP in 2021 and of the PRC in 2049 (Xi 2017). At times erroneously translated as having to be “basically realised” by those predefined years, what is envisioned is a two-phased scheme each taking place over a fifteen-year period, with the former centennial goal to be completed between 2021 and 2035 and only then setting in motion the process for the latter, on those very foundations (Xi 2017). One can argue that the definition of these two goals, or indeed those ‘interim strategic objectives’ (Bowie 2019, 1), under Xi present a contemporary update to a similar outline proposed by Deng Xiaoping.

The ‘three-step strategy’ [三步发展战略] defined under Deng Xiaoping included resolving the problem of ample food and clothing between 1981 and 1991 by doubling the country’s GDP and again from 1991 to 2000 to enable a well-off life for the Chinese population. Interestingly, the third step presented the longest period of all, taking place between 2020-2050. Here, particularly the third step between 2020 and 2050 featured as the least defined, despite being the longest period (Zhang, Xiaojing; Chang 2015; C. He 2017, 3). An interesting argument that one can make here posits that, as the goals defined by earlier by the Chinese leadership become a distant future, a rather more concrete time frame is again provided to mitigate brewing tensions concerning the conflict between biding time and asserting one’s rightful claims (perceived or otherwise). It is within such time frames and their connected goalposts that lies the real legitimacy of the CCP, as given by its mandate of history (Terrill 2003, 312) and validated by the socialist revolution of 1949. At same time, it is clear that as these new goals themselves draw closer, the same problem of legitimacy arises anew. An even more problematic situation arises when these the ability to realise those presupposed goals becomes under foreign pressure (be it directly or indirectly). Such thwarted or obstructed

ambitions, Steven Ward argues, unleash psychological and political forces within the rising power that makes it possible for hard-line rather than moderate policies to be pushed forward (Ward 2017, 3). In this regard, the actions that the Party-state might take become all the more critical. As of now, a similar issue resides with the proclaimed end-goal of 2049, which by itself offers little knowledge about what comes after.

As has been demonstrated before, such a temporal understanding of China's rise is crucial as it grants an understanding of the time horizons inherent in that rise to power: those considerations of the relative power of the adversary through a reading of its current and future strengths and weaknesses. Here, one might decide to cooperate with China as a potentially threatening state while interpreting its rise to power only happening in a few decades (Edelstein 2017) or banking on its collapse in the near future (Ford 2015a). Similarly, China itself might attempt to realise its rise to power before its economic slowdown has an impact on that endeavour (Ford 2015a, 496). In other words, while the country is currently in a rising trajectory relative to the United States (a country that finds itself in relative decline), its falling trajectory (Brands 2018a; Beckley 2019) might spur more assertive behaviour in the three decades to come. However, through its primary focus on how ideology guides the temporal strategising of the rising power, this thesis is in the first place concerned with the political vision that is positive and forward-looking. Nevertheless, this reference to the literature on falling, rather than rising powers, becomes interesting when seen in the light of a state's inability to realise its goals.

## **4. Conclusion**

Discussions of China's rise can be divided in largely two camps. Based on the notion of a circular rise, the first of these interpret the contemporary rise of China as the rectification of the historical injustice that was the fall of the Chinese empire in 1911. The second camp, by contrast, is more contemporary and puts forward analyses of the current Party-state in terms of the

economic boom that started under Deng Xiaoping in 1978. Essentially, both these perspectives touch upon a certain teleology as often espoused by the Chinese Party-state: the first being the renaissance of the Chinese nation after a century of humiliation; the second one espousing the pragmatic, economy-first approach that is envisioned within China's rise. However, in both such analyses there is but little understanding of what exactly guides China's rise, both in terms of its overarching objectives and the manner in which this rise to power is presumed to unfold. At the heart of this issue lay the facts that the Chinese Party-state is often defined as an exotic entity whose difference with the Western world is perceived as fundamentally stark.

Perhaps the most important example here includes the frequent exposition on the nature of the current Chinese Party-state as it has existed since 1949 in terms of the empire, which can include anything before 1911. Instead, as this chapter argued, the theory of historical materialism allows for a much more temporally minded analysis of China's rise (of or relating to time), answering the question of how (the manner in which) China is rising and informing the other questions as to what policies are pursued and to where China is rising. Building on the theoretical framework captured within this chapter, the subsequent chapters will expand on these questions. By judging China's current rise to power, what emerges is a vision of a positive future that is entirely fixated on the (socialist) modernisation of the country under the central leadership of the CCP. Here, the Party-state is building on its ideology of communism, which is one of progress and modernity.

The socialist break in China's history of 1949, then, requires that China's current rise is explained through a CCP and PRC framework. Here, the realisation of the 'primary stage of socialism' is envisioned by the Chinese leadership to take place between over a hundred-year period between 1949 and 2049. One common dissection of this period can be found in Image 3 above, another is present with an official analysis which presents China's socialist history in

three “great leaps:” with China standing up under Mao Zedong, getting rich under Deng Xiaoping, and eventually getting strong under Xi Jinping. It is Xi who will presumably bring China to the realisation of its rise to power. To do so, there is talk of ‘two centennial goals’ that will see China reach moderate prosperity between 2021 and 2035 and achieve socialist modernisation in the fifteen-year period that follows. This phased approach is revealing for the continuing importance of the socialist ideology in China, and particularly the theory of historical materialism that is present herein. As demonstrated above, this chapter follows Nikolai Bukharin’s mechanistic interpretation of this theory. In his work, he describes the transformation from a quantitative to a qualitative state through the merger of internal contradictions. One example is the ‘principal society in society’ as (re)defined over time by the Chinese leadership.

Subsequently, this chapter applied this theory on the rise of China, initially tracing the connection between Bukharin’s theory, how it entered China under Mao Zedong, and after the tumultuous period that started in the later 1950s re-emerged under Deng Xiaoping. Historical materialism’s close appreciation for the change from a quantitative to a qualitative state is emphasised through this chapter’s exposition on the transition from Mao to Deng and from Deng to Xi. Beyond analysing China’s rise from the perspective of socio-economic development, the theory of historical materialism is also applicable to understand the calculative strategy pursued by the Chinese leadership. Here, again, a certain appreciation of dialectics is important. One of the most central debates here is China’s presumably changing assertiveness. In its formulation of a strategy for China’s rise, the CCP is highly aware of the opportunities and threats that accompany it. Showcasing a similar approach towards the dialectical juxtaposition between two opposing forces.

While such an appreciation of the ups and downs within the country's rise to great-power status is a common-sensical argument, observations of China's rise often explain these assessments as evidence for China's presumed long-term strategy. The concept of 'periods of opportunity' and their related strategic guidelines can be connected to the theory of historical materialism. These act as a more concrete analysis than arguments about the advantages of China's presumed long-term strategy. Instead, this research posits that understanding this concept could add to understanding "one of the most [...] crucial issues in current geopolitics", that is China's temporal strategising (K. Brown 2017b, 22). Indeed, critics argue, one ought not to confuse China's abiding attitude for a long-term strategy. In fact, the rather more low-profile approach that China has followed at least from the 1980s onwards (and explicitly since 1991) has problems all of its own when it comes to broken promises and unresolved expectations. Hereto, the slowdown of the Chinese economy might add as a contributing factor. Whatever the case, there is clear degree of confusion surrounding the nature of China's pragmatism and assertiveness because of the shift that is now said to be happenings towards "striving for achievement" (see above).

Thus far, this chapter demonstrated the historical materialism behind the stages of development visible within the Chinese economic growth over the course of China's rise. Similarly, in the Chinese leadership's analysis of the threats and opportunities on the international stage, the definition of a new 'period of opportunity.' The shift from a quantitative to a new, qualitative shift is here reflected in the definition of a new 'principal contradiction in society,' and an updated strategic focus in the country's foreign policy. In combining both of these developments, Xi Jinping in 2017 declared both a new contradiction in society, as well as declaring that the previous period of strategic opportunity was nearing its end, and China would after 2022 move towards a 'period of historic opportunity.' If this logic applies to these

aforementioned elements, one can beg the question whether the other elements that this thesis is concerned with can also be explained through this historical materialist trend behind China's rise. It is for this reason that the following chapters aim to investigate the (Bukharinist) gradualism of the early years under Mao (1953-1958) and its connection to the current period under Xi Jinping but also how historical materialism informs the present rolling out of the Belt and Road Initiative.

# Chapter 2:

## China's Rise and its Divergent Trajectory: The Sino-Soviet Split and the USSR's Fall

WILL CHINA FOLLOW or avoid the fate of the Soviet Union? This chapter explores the role of the one-party system in socialist rising powers, as evidenced by the Soviet Union and China today, and how the experience of political-institutional reform presents a challenge that decides the continued rise or imminent fall of that power. In so doing, it presents a more nuanced understanding of the trajectory of socialist rising powers as untenable solely because of the ideologically divergent nature of these states. A striking divide in the literature over China's continuing existence as a socialist state compels this question. It is a phenomenon aptly summarised as *Sinophrenia* (Orlik 2020, 187): a simultaneous prediction of China's imminent collapse as well as its coming success. By contrast, it is equally interesting to ask when and how China might collapse; as it is to investigate how China might thrive under its authoritarian regime (see before). To do so, this chapter emphasises the comparative value of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)'s experience. It was at the height of the Cold War, in 1989, Paul Samuelson and William Nordhaus argued that: "The Soviet economy is proof that, contrary to what many [sceptics] had earlier believed, a socialist economy can function and thrive" (quoted in L. H. White 2012, 65). Surprisingly, that same state fell to ruins just two years later. In China, the CCP is actively seeking to prevent such a "peaceful evolution" [和平演变] of its governing mandate (Z. Jiang 1993; Ong 2007).



A closer comparison between the respective trajectories of the two socialist rising powers, and their interactions over time, necessitates itself. However, both states (as rising powers or otherwise) continue to be largely treated as single-model examples in their respective debates (Levy, David M.; Peart 2006, 125-136; Rosenau 2006, 229-245). While now polemical, Samuelson and Nordhaus' statement is altogether not an invalid one. Indeed, much the same argument can be made about China today. Exactly how this scenario might play out is one of the primary concerns in the debate on China's rise. Economic studies, for example, increasingly put questions marks around the economic miracle of the past four decades (Magnus 2018; McMahon 2018). Indicative of the wider thesis, this chapter is more concerned with the manner in which China completes its rise, that is: when China is able to become a great power on an illiberal, socialist basis. The actor, the single-party system, behind this development is, then, perhaps even more important to study than the economy it oversees. Collapse of the party system, then, can be identified as the root cause of the demise of a state such as the Soviet Union. While other, more approximate contributors to the fall of this great state are also important to consider, they do not serve the purposes of the current chapter and are, thus, largely omitted.

## **1. The Collapse of the Soviet Union**

As a result of the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, confusion abounds surrounding the exact causes of this development. Identifying and distinguishing the main and marginal sources behind the fall of a socialist great power of this kind, thus, remains a key field of inquiry. One could argue that the Soviets' prolonged intervention in Afghanistan (1980 to 1988) put a drag on the nation's economy. Yet it is but part of the story. Authors such as Artemy Kalinovsky, for example, note that the military costs associated with Afghanistan presented but a "bleeding wound, the flow [of which] came from a small vein of large animal" (2011, 92). This assessment

is echoed by Nikolas Gvosdev who notes that “chronic ailments [are] not necessarily fatal” (Gvosdev 2008, 165-166). As an explanation for the downwards trajectory of great powers, and their success or collapse, such approaches to the Soviet Union thus remain unsatisfactory. Others note the actions taken by the USA. Arms racing in the nuclear and space domains under President Ronald Reagan here served to outcompete its Soviet adversary (Lebow; Stein 1995; Busch 1997), but so too did the US export of Stinger missiles to Afghanistan (Bliesemann de Guevara; Goetze 2019). Another explanation argues that the Soviet economy was slowly dying, despite a persistent belief that it was soon to overtake the United States (Magness 2020; Sakwa 2017). Instead of judging one cause over the other, it may be more useful to perceive of these three separate contributors (intervention abroad, arms racing, and economic stagnation) more as catalysts for the demise of the Soviet state itself.

Reflective of a wider mood in the study of Chinese politics, authors such as Minxin Pei argue that the pursuit of economic reforms is considered to be the desired channel for the Party-state in China to preserve its rigid political framework (Pei 2002, 98). Lessons identified from the Soviet collapse by the contemporary Chinese leadership, contrariwise, allows for a reconsideration of this, seemingly, defining characteristic of China’s rise: its continued economic growth as a prerequisite for this development. A more dynamic interpretation of this analysis, between both economic and political scrutiny, is therefore necessary. Presently, under Xi Jinping, the narrative holds that it was not so much economic fault lines but the inability of the ruling party to hold on to its central control of power that is the single most important cause behind the Soviet’s demise. Following such a fear for state collapse, the opposite logic naturally calls for a strengthening of central party leadership in all layers of society, business, and government; while simultaneously recharging the ideological legitimacy of the party (see next chapter).

## Party Collapse in the Soviet Union

The comparative value of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to those political parties that modelled themselves after it, is undeniable. Its fatal experience in 1991, however, is not (Shevtsova 1992). Pervasive in their presence, one-party systems stand or fall with the political party and its hold on power (Knight 2003). In his study of party collapse in single-party systems, Graeme Gill notes how assessments of such a development are largely based on the liberal-democratic experience (1994, 1). It is an argument most famously described by Fukuyama (2006) who argued that with the end of the Soviet Union, the Cold War and, to some, the history of development came to an end. A subsequent reflex to refute ideological (or, indeed, Leninist) explanations for state behaviour and competition similarly builds on a particular reading of this end of history these (Fukuyama 2006), ostensibly demonstrating that authoritarian dictatorships are ideologically void and on the brink of collapse (through the ensuing liberalisation of their political model). One-party states, then, are solely sustained by the lingering presence of their illiberal security apparatus (Ci 2019, 4), perhaps the most critical tool that allows an authoritarian state to continue existing, even in the face of ideological and economic decay (J. Zeng 2016, 16; Perry 2018).

It is an argument most clearly voiced by contemporary Russian President Vladimir Putin who in the early 2000s described the collapse of the Soviet Union as the “greatest geopolitical disaster of the [twentieth] century” (quoted in Hill, Fiona; Gaddy 2012, 55-56). Rather than nostalgia for the economic and political system of the socialist great power, it is above all the crumbling of the Russian state, in whatever form or capacity, that Putin decries. As will be demonstrated below, the Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping similarly identifies this loss of central party control and, as such, the collapse of the functioning of the state writ large, as the original sin of Soviet collapse. In Chinese history since the fall of the Qing empire, this

question is of course a classic reckoning with the dilemma between saving the state or saving the nation (Wright 1957). This predicament also refers to the retention of territorial integrity as a primordial concern of the central state. To move the chapter away from the twin forces of coming collapse or imminent success, it is imperative to take a deeper look, historically, at the process of political-institutional reform that precedes such developments.

It is generally assumed that China's rise follows a similar trajectory akin to those rising powers before it (Ward 2017). Most of these cases, however, do not account for socialist rising powers. Because of the sparsity of the debate, ideologically divergent rising powers are not accounted for in terms of their political-ideological organisation. Where the political party is considered, moreover, there is a general tendency to analyse the world's remaining one-party states, such as China, "by the standard of their predecessors [in the Soviet Union and elsewhere]." Perceiving of these regimes as living on borrowed time, tethering on the brink of "degeneration or extinction," further limits the generalisability of the trajectories of these socialist rising powers (Huntington 1970, 24).

Rather than grand strategic analyses of the rise and fall of great powers, it is imperative to look at the agents of these socialist rising powers: the ideological one-party states themselves. The CPSU, much like the CCP today, is exactly that teleological agent (see previous chapter), building on Marxist-Leninist ideology not only to justify its own rule but also to guide the state towards its intended future (Gill 1994, 12). Counterintuitively, perhaps, to how it is often described, *Perestroika*, the process of institutional reform under Michail Gorbachev, paradoxically combined the continuing leading role of the Party-state with a Soviet-style democratisation and openness (Robinson 1995, 1-2; Kotkin 2020).

Reading those events retroactively in a post-Cold War sentiment confuses, as Neil Robinson points out, the unintended consequences of that reform process with its aim of

reemphasising the CPSU's role in Soviet society. Studies on this particular aspect of the Soviet Union's demise note that this disregard for the continuing allegiance to Soviet ideology led to a reading of Gorbachev's policies as reformative, open, and, therefore, eventually liberal. Such an approach is mistaken, since it assumes that the political elite perceived of itself as an autonomous group which employed the Party-state's ideology merely for instrumental reasons. On the contrary, it is the reproduction of this ideology that serves as the main legitimising instrument for the political party (Robinson 1995, 3-5). Ideology is, thus, the primary factor within such states.

The elite, whether at the apex body of decision-making, all the way down to the local level, all venerate, in varying degrees, this guiding philosophy. That is not to say that there is an irrational adherence to ideology, nor that internal positions or policies may not differ from that ideological orthodoxy. It is the reproduction of the reigning ideology which serves the conformity of policy in a process that can be called "working towards the [leader]" (Kershaw 2008). Because of this nature, ideological disturbances are not mere matters the party can navigate past and set aside in favour of more "immediate problems" of everyday governance (Robinson 1995, 8). They are primordial ones, to which the one-party's fate is inextricably connected. In other words, ideological problems are institutional ones which directly concern the Party organisation. Instead of ideological obsolescence, it is the failure to reproduce this ideology within the political party that leads to the downfall of that system and, by consequence, of that regime.

### **Rising Powers and Regime Type Difference**

Regime theory, by contrast, holds that authoritarian regimes are "inherently weak" due to their inefficient feedback loops, and the weak mediating role of civil society and law (Nathan 2003).

A regime is distinct from the state, which is a Weberian conception narrowly defined here as

administrative, law-enforcement, and security-military organizations under the centralized control of a supreme authority. Empirically, the two often overlap and are, fundamentally, symbiotic. A regime uses the instruments of the state to maintain itself and advance its goals. And the state, largely through the power arrangement formalized by the regime, extracts resources from society to keep itself in existence” (Pei 1994, 6).

Communist regimes moreover enjoy the “added defect” of being “ideologically as well as politically separate from society” (Gilley 2004, 32-33). As such, a transition from communism is dual in nature (marketisation and democratisation) and as such different from transition from authoritarian regimes (Pei 1994, 11-16; 43). The end of the Cold War provided evidence for the belief that socialism is not a viable model of development. As a result, the assumption grew that all Marxist-Leninist powers would eventually move towards post-communism in all but name. Absent any liberalisation, these persistent dictatorships now seemingly were reduced to pursuing power *for power’s sake*. Differences in regime type, particularly with regards to the ideological nature of these states, continue to play a decisive role in the interstate relationship between liberal and socialist states (Brands 2018b; Kania 2019). Are we thus dealing with the CCP as a state ruling over China merely for its own power’s sake or is the party genuinely ruling for the Chinese people’s welfare? Furthermore, is this pursuit of greater welfare, that is the betterment of the living conditions within China a form of self-legitimation for the CCP (Ringen 2016; Ci 2019)?

Below, the theoretical framework explains why the transition from one regime type to the next is not always a conscious choice that is made by the existing leadership but can rather come about as a result of forces in society that are making demands over the longer term. These demands from civil society notwithstanding, it is important to note the effects of such market reforms on the party itself, which for the CPSU led to widespread corruption in the political

centre (see below). While the economic reforms figured as the most direct cause of this corruption, it was again poor political governance that allowed such endemic problems to fester (Gilley 2004; Pei 2016). As such, it is crucial, Ci Jiwei notes, for those in power to demonstrate “not [...] how well those already authorized to be in power are using to serve public ends but rather to make clear why they are authorized to be in power in the first place. In other words, it speaks to legitimacy *ex ante* rather than performance *ex post* – to the normative origin or basis of political power regardless of performance as long as the latter is lawful” (Ci 2019, 17-20; 63).

The literature provides an interesting set of concepts that allows us to make the distinction between the Chinese Party-state, the country’s civil society, and the world of business. In liberal-democratic states, one may think of these three groups as connected by a ‘democratic triangle’ (Huyse 2014). In the case of China, the biggest exception with liberal democracies is of course that extra dimension of the party leading over the state, while being a separate dimension altogether (Gilley 2004, 33). This chapter is primarily concerned with internal dimensions of the Soviet collapse. In particular, the argument is made that political rule and ideology serve as the two primary forces with which the current CCP seeks to sustain its rule. Interestingly enough, Jinghan Zeng here distinguishes between (formal) communist rule and (informal) authoritarian rule. Zeng echoes earlier studies that note a contradiction between the introduction of market mechanisms and its “socialist commitments” (J. Zeng 2016, 18-23). This distinction can be extended to the concepts of ‘ideological legitimacy’ and ‘performance legitimacy.’ In the case of China, it is generally assumed that the adoption of capitalism during the reform and opening-up period essentially meant a distancing from its ideological roots, that is its revolutionary mandate, or right to rule by which the CCP adopted socialism as a means of

self-determination, and the CCP presented itself as the most effective modernisers of China (C. Lin 2006; see before).

Casting the question of socialism's viability as a model of development differently, one may ask whether China is stuck between two extremes. It is a situation often described as China's trapped transition (Pei 2008) between incumbent liberalisation or further centralisation of the Party-state's governing power. In economic terms, this dilemma refers to the middle-income trap, as referred to earlier (Lewin, Arie Y.; Kenney, Martin; Murmann 2013, 1-31). Arguments here note that China can only continue to rise if it were to liberalise its model. Authors such as Eric C. Hendriks make the connection between the need for pluralised, open institutions to ensure further growth and development in China, all the while noting that democracy is more than just elections, as it ensures not only growth but also, importantly, stability (Hendriks 2017). Indeed, as Will Hutton notes, the "circular logic" of liberal institutions as serving markets, and thus growth and development, is limiting. Instead, non-market institutions of accountability, transparency, justifications, knowledge, and civil participation present the true strength of a liberal-democratic system (Hutton 2008).

## **2. The Sino-Soviet Split of 1953-1958**

As previously alluded to, the Red Schism, the ideological and diplomatic separation between China and the Soviet Union represents the different deliberations of the respective ruling parties concerning their role in society and in the world at large. Khrushchev's triple policy of de-Stalinisation in the ideological-political, economic, and international domains after 1953 pit the two socialist powers against one another. Rather than world revolution, the Soviet Union now pursued peaceful co-existence with the West, much to the consternation of Mao's China at the time. Rather than a tribute to the person of Joseph Stalin himself, China's opposition to de-Stalinisation served as symbolic resistance against the weakening of the central party control



(Radchenko 2020, 273-278). The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, at a time when China waged war against India galvanised the Chinese leadership's earlier concerns about the Soviet Union's revisionism into a global battle for influence in the developing world (Friedman 2015, 94). Authors such as Minxin Pei contrasts the Soviet's decay and collapse during the period 1985 to 1991 with the economic boom that took off in China after 1978, and particularly during the 1990s (1994, 46). This chapter, by contrast, argues that the divergent trajectories of these socialist states can be traced back much earlier: during the Sino-Soviet Split of 1955-1966. While events of 1989 demonstrated the adverse consequences of choices made earlier, the earlier divorce between these two socialist powers arguably set in motion a process of eventual collapse for the Soviet Union; political and economic success for China (Pei 1994, 1-3; see also Torigian 2020).

One could argue that the rupture in the communist bloc that was the Sino-Soviet Split was a conflict waiting to happen. Indeed, as Jeremy Friedman argues, while both the CPSU and the CCP "claimed to be 'Marxist-Leninist' parties [...] they were in fact two very different parties confronting different problems and pursuing different agendas" (Friedman 2015, 7). While in the Leninist tradition, capitalism was inextricably connected to imperialism, it was the respective primacy that was given to either anti-capitalism (USSR) or anti-imperialism (PRC) that would come to define the conflict (Friedman 2015, 1-3). In this regard, the PRC prioritised 'national independence' and the "growth of production in general," allowing for the introduction of market forces without such mechanisms going against the ideological doctrine of socialism (Friedman 2015, 119). The Sino-Soviet Split of 1956-1966 is an interesting event in the Cold War's history to study as it fundamentally altered the nature of China's socialist transformation. while the USSR originally acted as the socialist example that was to be followed (Schurmann 1966, 40-41), the country would be vilified following the disastrous end of the

Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) in an attempt by Mao to not only to re-establish his position within the CCP but also to unite the PRC against a new military threat (Vanbrandwijk 1974, 140-143; Fravel 2019, 107-128).

### Self-obsolescing Authoritarianism?

Observing the fate of socialist powers, Xi noted that it is only by taking the “correct direction of the reform and opening-up [period] that China can avoid the serious crisis of party and national decay that struck the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries” (Xi 2019c). That is not to say that the contemporary Chinese leadership has already found the method to avoid the fate of the USSR. Instead, the emphasis on continuing (political) reform and (economic) development demonstrates a certain sensitivity towards the central role of the ruling party. The steadfast belief in the strength of its own capabilities and the ability to avoid the fate of the Soviet Union, also reveals a primordial fear for Soviet-style collapse. Both Deng Xiaoping and Mikhail Gorbachev are associated with launching necessary periods of reform and opening-up for their respective nations. Neither *Gaige kaifang*, nor *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, however, can be understood as liberalising along the liberal-democratic model. Building on the earlier discussion of the choices made during the CPSU’s process of institutional reform, it can be assumed that both Deng and Gorbachev aimed to retain central party control. What, then, explains the demise of the one and the economic take-off of the other, despite both leaders making quite similar choices of reform and opening-up? To briefly consider a theoretical approach towards this topic, the Tocquevillian Paradox is an explanatory tool to judge why certain one-party systems undergoing reform crumble, while others endure.

A relevant illustration gleaned from the Sinosphere notes the democratisation of the Republic of China under Chiang Ching-kuo after 1988. Taiwan’s Cold War designation as a free, non-communist China (R. L. Walker 1959) can be confusing. Instead of an example of

Chinese democracy, the continuing presence of the Kuomintang (KMT) rendered the country stuck somewhere between authoritarianism and democracy (Mattlin 2011, 9-19; 45; Grzymala-Busse 2020; Jacobs 2019). On this topic, the Self-obsolescing Authoritarianism Paradigm is perhaps one of the most important lessons to learn from the Taiwanese process of democratisation. The concept describes the decline of an authoritarian state, while the “institutions and individuals who perpetrated it” survive politically (Steinfeld 2010, 218-234). The choices that were made at that particular period in time, guided by the ever-present dilemma of Taiwan being captured between a desire for closer economic ties with the PRC (Hasegawa 2018), while being fearful of increasing political dependence on Mainland China (S. S. Lin 2016, 206-255), were self-obsolescing in nature. The case illustrates that despite primary concerns for the survival of their political party (for Chiang, Deng, as well as Gorbachev), forces of society at times decided otherwise.

In this regard, Mikael Mattlin notes that “political transitions rarely occur with the old political elite intact and firmly in power for any extended period of time” (2011, 12-14). Rather than a historical example of how the CCP’s future might look like, this case is interesting as it renders a third alternative to how authoritarian parties attempt to hold on to power, or more concretely, aim to sustain their political existence in a multi-party system. Yet another, fourth alternative is also possible. This development is explained as the Tocquevillian Paradox, or the fact that the call for reform makes revolution inevitable (Pei 1994, 43-84; Dickson 2016, 165). The Chinese leadership, particularly Wang Qishan, is keenly aware of the paradoxes present in the writings of the French author (Fulda 2016, 71–96; Fewsmith 2012) In his *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856), Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) observes “how the reign of Louis XIV was the most prosperous period of the ancient monarchy [in France] and how that very prosperity hastened the Revolution” (1967, 269-281). Indeed, de Tocqueville contends:

The regime that a revolution destroys is almost always more fortunate than the one that immediately preceded it, and experience teaches that **the most dangerous moment for a bad government is usually when it begins to reform.** [...] The evil that was patiently suffered as inevitable seems unbearable as soon as one contemplates the idea of escaping from it. [...] The smallest blows of Louis XVI's arbitrariness seemed harder to bear than all the despotism of Louis XIV (1967, 277-278; own emphasis, A.D.).

It was public opinion that made the state become preoccupied with “thousands of projects to increase public wealth” by building “roads, canals, factories, and commerce.” And yet, while public prosperity continued to grow, France’s political institutions at the time remained relatively unchanged, and a form of social lethargy set in. It could very well be a description of China. Once this imbalance was recognised, Tocqueville continues, it was the privileged classes that exclaimed loudly and in the presence of the people about the “cruel injustice of which they had always been the victim.” They entertained themselves by “pointing out the monstrous vices of the institutions,” and “employed their rhetoric to paint [an image] of their misery and their undercompensated labour.” In so doing, the very awareness by the governments and its chief agents of the necessary political reform, “filled [the people] with fury in their attempt to relieve them.” To put it briefly, it was the recognition of the need for reform that invalidated the mandate of political rule. Indeed, by making that public declaration that reform was necessary, the elite admitted that their current rule did not meet the needs of the people (de Tocqueville 1967, 270-271; 280). It was exactly this recognition of the need for reform that invalidated the mandate of political rule.

These predictions fit respectively with the Tocqueville Paradox and the Self-Obsolescing Authoritarianism Paradigm with which socialist powers can be investigated. What is generally ignored in this literature and, perhaps, a result of the Tocquevillian interpretation of reform in communist or otherwise authoritarian states, is to ask what happens if reform is implemented “as intended” and as serving exactly that role of continued central power for the political Party-state despite opposition from diverse interest groups in society (Finkel, Evgeny; Gehlbach 2018). For this reason, this chapter aims to focus on China’s elite leadership’s efforts

to escape the Tocquevillian Paradox. Here, Western misconceptions of the concept ‘reform’ as it is and was used by the socialist powers outlined above, erroneously follow the singular argument that there is but one pathway for those countries to reach modernity. As a result, the most recent iteration of this debate now observes that in the three decades after the end of the Cold War, one can now observe a return of history in the pursuit of “great power competition” (Blankenship, Brian D.; Denison 2019; Nexon 2021).

Yet did these socialist one-party states ever go away? One could argue that such competition, whether it is laden with ideology or mere geopolitical considerations, has merely returned from having never gone away. As mentioned above, the risky and dangerous moment that is the pursuit of reforms is captured in the Tocquevillian Paradox, yet it is ultimately a political risk worth taking. This necessary risk is what stands described as the dictator’s (Dickson 2016), or the reformer’s dilemma (Pei 1994, 45-46), or what Tocqueville describes as the “impatient [and] imaginative search for betterment” (de Tocqueville 1967, 271). Instead of liberalisation, reform in the socialist context always served the cause of sustained central control. It is not surprising, then, that Chinese political statements from the immediate post-Soviet period until the present day, are very much focused on the causes and consequences of Soviet collapse. As former President of China, Jiang Zemin expressed in 2002:

When the Communist Party of the Soviet Union dissolved, the majority of Party member did not stand up to oppose it, resulting in the sudden collapse of a great party with over eighty years of history. What a thought-provoking lesson!

苏联共产党在被宣布解散时绝大部分党员没有站出来反对，结果一个有八十多年历史的大党顷刻之间土崩瓦解了，这教训还不发人深省啊！（quoted in Z. Jiang 2006, 423).

A similar sentiment would be repeated a decade later.

## China's Rise and the Sino-Soviet Split

Shortly after assuming the main leadership roles between 2012 and 2013, Secretary General Xi Jinping summarised the disintegration and collapse of the Soviet Union and its political party in similar terms. “It was because its ideals and beliefs were shaken.” Xi urged. “In numbers, the [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] was larger than ours, yet there was not a single person man enough to stand up and fight” (Xi 2019c). The internal discussion demonstrates the primordial concerns for continued party survival that the Soviet Union’s demise imprinted into the political calculations of the contemporary Chinese leadership (J. Zeng 2016, 8; Shambaugh 2008, 53-81). Policies pursued by the Chinese leadership since the period after Mao continuously led to the domestic understanding that a new direction was to be pursued in delivering the socialist ideal. It is important to note that these course adjustments took place within the enduring aim for the socialist goal of delivering communism. In the Chinese case, in particular, the adoption of “(quasi-)capitalist economic policies” also did not run counter to Chinese socialist ideology. Arguably, it is here that socialist China’s true pragmatism lies (J. Zeng 2016, 8). The Sino-Soviet Split, or the ideological schism between an anti-capitalist Soviet Union and an anti-imperialist PRC is an excellent illustration. The two core dilemmas that can be associated with China’s rapid economic growth are the impact on the country’s ideology, here understood as the country’s ideological adaptability and its institutional framework of governance (Shambaugh 2008; Pei 2008, 7). In this regard, Minxin Pei, for example, asks whether China’s economic success came about *because of* or *despite* pervasive corruption within the party (Pei 2009; Ang 2019a). In other words, one can ask whether China’s economic success has come despite the lack of political reform or because of the nature of its political model (Ci 2019, 3).

To understand the lessons China learnt from the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is first important to improve our analysis of whether it is the re-affirmation of central control that will allow the CCP not only to navigate past the troubles that led to the downfall of the USSR but also to steer clear of the governance and development model espoused by Western liberal democracy. To phrase it differently, the question can be posed whether the requirement for China to adopt liberal institutions ultimately boils down to an assessment between the primacy of the interests of the Chinese state at the cost of the CCP (Gilley 2004, 98-117) or in the interest of the CCP, often at the behest of the state (Minzner 2017; 2018). It is a slight modification of the aforementioned weighting between coming collapse or imminent success. Earlier concepts that seek to circumvent this fallacy talk about the resilience of such authoritarian systems. This authoritarian resilience, as it is called, contends that through a process of institutionalisation (Schubert; Alpermann 2019), the CCP is able to stay one step ahead. The introduction of norm-bound succession politics, increased meritocracy in its *nomenklatura*, the functional specialisation of its institutions, as well as the formal establishment of political institutions all serve that goal (Nathan 2003, 6-7). What emerges is an authoritarian state that is perceived as increasingly technocratic (and therefore less ideological).

Rather than an analysis of a Party-state that is pragmatic in its policymaking and meritocratic in its selection procedures, it ought again to be emphasised that these seeming foundations are anything but “value-neutral and culture-free” (Pye 1988, 75). It is exactly this institutionalisation, understood as a strengthening of the Party-state’s formal political and policymaking processes that sits at the heart of this chapter. Authoritarian resilience works on the assumption that a greater role to the state and, thus, a normalisation of its procedures (Fewsmith; Nathan 2018, 167) is reflected in the enduring nature of these states. In so approaching CCP, however, this particular theory does not nothing more than reiterate the

atypical nature of this political entity. It is only one step removed from similarly noting that only through further liberalisation, China can endure. Instead of the expected state building, as predicted by the authoritarian resilience these, there is a growing tendency towards party building. Indeed, the further centralisation of power under Xi Jinping puts the balance increasingly towards the party rather than the state (S. Lee 2017). Similarly, Yuen Yuen Ang summarises it briefly: “China’s economic success is not proof that relying on top-down commands and suppressing bottom-up initiative work” (Ang 2018a). It can therefore be judged as rather strange that Xi is trying to undo exactly that, by re-asserting central control of the CCP (Cabestan 2017; S. Lee 2017). In analogy with the phenomenon of the ‘state advances, civil society retreats,’ then, this new development can be described in terms of the ‘party advances, the state retreats’ (Shen; Yu; Zhou 2020) or the fact that the CCP’s answer for the future is sought “within the context of a more statist, more Party-centric, more disciplined, more self-regulating, and ultimately more Leninist political system” (Feigenbaum 2017).

### **3. Institutional Reform in Contemporary China**

The Sino-Soviet Split renders more complex the traditional reading of the Cold War (1947-1991) as a conflict between the capitalist world and the communist bloc (Lüthi 2008; Friedman 2015). This clash is an important element of study, as it arguably decided the respective trajectories of the political parties in question: one obsolescing, the other now ruling for seventy years. In 2019, the PRC even surpassed the Soviet Union’s ninety-six years of existence (Dixon, Robyn; Su 2019). This seventy-year period of rule often figures as a litmus test for authoritarian, socialist regimes (Gandhi; Przeworski 2007). It is, however, largely a symbolic one and but little revealing about the fate of socialist rising powers. In terms of generalisability, it says also adds but little about the enduring nature of the single-party states that sit behind them. A work published at the turn of the century made this case explicitly by identifying the year 2019 as the



“[near] upper limit” of CCP rule (Gilley 2004, 32; Ci 2019, 17, 36-38, 72-77). The Party’s transition of this threshold features not only as a testing period for socialist powers, it also can become an example of how alternatives to the Western liberal-democratic model can, in fact, be successful.

The fact that both China and the United States “[are] strong enough to create conditions around the world” is the “key problem of our time” (Kissinger in Roy 2018). This understanding of the near-peer status between the United States and the PRC, or more conceptually, between the established hegemon and a rising power, is important to understand. More concretely, one ought to ask the question whether the PRC can bridge the middle-income trap of slowing growth on a socialist basis. In other words, can China continue to rise through the perpetuation of central control by the Party-state? Moving away from party collapse, this thesis is clearly more interested in the reverse scenario: China’s continued rise to power. In what follows, this chapter clarifies the concept of institutional reform as it is unfolding in the contemporary CCP, building on the previous historical-ideological exploration of the CPSU’s similar pursuits of a few decades earlier. Since the process is developing at present, the chapter reserves an actual institutional analysis for further research. For an understanding of how the process of institutional reform may impact the functional networks between the vertical lines of authority, let alone the horizontal ones of the dual-nature of the Party-state, this chapter refers the reader to the basic work by Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg (1988, 141).

### **Institutional Reform under Xi Jinping**

Contemporary institutional reform under Xi Jinping (particularly since 2017 to the present, as of writing) serves the reassertion of central party leadership. This attempt at modernising China’s governance system and capabilities reveals an elite-led effort to reform the political institutions of the country. In so doing, the contemporary Chinese leadership is moving away

from respectively the routes taken by Mikhail Gorbachev and Chiang Ching-kuo while re-affirming the lessons of Stalinism for central control over ideology and institutions. Important elements here include rapid industrialisation and collectivisation, the building of socialism in one country, and sustained central leadership. Through this total control over society, or the idea of the “party leads all,” China under Xi Jinping also deviates from the argument that because of its preoccupation on economic growth under an unreformed political framework, the prospects for gradual reform in China are dim at best (Gilley 2004). It is nevertheless important to note that in conjunction with such a strengthened position of the party, Xi Jinping similarly defined a new ‘principal contradiction in society,’ between the “increasing demands for a good life by the people” and the “unbalanced and inadequate development” (Xi 2017).

These changing conditions are visible in Xi Jinping’s adage of the “three great leaps” that China’s rise went through, which argue that China stood up under Mao Zedong, grew rich under Deng Xiaoping, and finally is to grow strong under Xi (2017). The logical conclusion one can draw from this observation is that the focus of the party’s attention is shifted from economic growth to political-ideological strengthening. Following Tocqueville, an increased level of (central) control during periods of proposed reform is crucial, for it could decide the balance between continued power to rule or the regime’s downfall. As will be noted below, this explanation demonstrates why slowing economic growth does not necessarily undermine the party’s legitimacy, ideologically or performatively speaking. The combined focus on ideological and performative legitimacy, respectively responding to the regime and the governance’s continuing existence and reflected in the re-affirmation of the party’s ideology but also its institutional capacity to govern features the most important questions at present.

Instead, this chapter argues that the true distinction between the different trajectories of the CPSU and CCP sits with the re-affirmation of the latter’s political-ideological governance

capability. Yet here, again, also sits its biggest risk, as the system is as of old susceptible to revolt. In a Tocquevillian context, this promise of a better livelihood features as the “big bet” that lies at the heart of Xi Jinping’s period reform, particularly in asking what happens if a non-representative state is also deemed unresponsive (Feigenbaum 2017). It is against these government institutions that public discontent is channelled, because what else is reform than the overthrow of the old institutions? (Gilley 2004; Ci 2019). Similarly, where commentators generally assumed that China identified economic growth as the most important lessons that could be gleaned from the Soviet Union’s downfall, such an economic focus is unsatisfactory for the Soviet Union’s downfall as much as it is for China’s contemporary rise.

This contrast with both its former Soviet-Russian and its current liberal counterparts is put most concretely by asserting the superiority of the CCP’s ‘new model of political party system.’ In so doing, a distinct path, a *Sonderweg*, is set out through an emphasis on China’s traditional past and its experiences with socialism. While previous studies have already demonstrated how traditional concepts are being employed by the socialist Party-state (Ford 2015b; Jiang, T.H.; O’Dwyer 2019), this chapter focuses more concretely on the institutional changes through which the Chinese leadership seek to preserve central party leadership. Here, the CCP can be seen as conservative in so far that it seeks to validate the contemporary one-party rule through past economic success and by embedding its Marxist-Leninist system within China’s imperial history. Concerning this latter point, China’s cultural roots is put forward as the current government’s spiritual core (M. Yu 2018). It is mistaken, however, to see this reappreciation of the Confucian past as a source of authoritarian resilience (Heberer 2016). More critically, Ci Jiwei argues that Confucianism is not a “functional [alternative to] the democratic rule of law” (Ci 2019, 147-155). While such approaches are interesting, the stringent

reach of this chapter does not allow for an exploration. It can therefore be assumed that Confucianism has little to do with political power in the contemporary PRC.

### **Centralisation of Power under Xi Jinping**

Whereas commentators identified the slogan of the “party leading all” as the most important element coming out of the 2017 NPC (Xi 2017), it is exactly this reaffirmation of Marxism-Leninism that is important for our understanding of the period under Xi Jinping. Building on the aforementioned loss of ideological legitimacy, one interesting interpretation of this dual theme of original aspiration and mission observes the “looming legitimacy crisis” that is threatening the Chinese leadership (Ci 2019, 17; 38). In this regard, Ci Jiwei argues that the “future of the Party-state’s legitimacy and the shape and timing of any legitimization crisis will be determined chiefly by the trajectory of the CCP’s communist revolutionary legacy rather than by contingencies of its performance.” (Ci 2019, 73) After four decades of economic growth, then, Ci observes the “positive evisceration” of the party’s revolutionary spirit in exchange for a performance-based legitimacy of “economic success and national rejuvenation” (Ci 2019, 72-77). Yet, as Ci argues, the danger here presents itself as a plausibility crisis, since the CCP will in the next one or two decades be confronted with the loss of its revolutionary capital and, as such, its right to rule or the reason why it should be in power in the first place (Ci 2019, 36-37).

The previous discussion puts forward an interpretation of China’s modern rise. The image of China’s “prolonged rise” (J. Chen 2019) to power or indeed the “non-linearity” of this rise (Garlick 2016, 284-305) that is presented here is similar to a description of the Soviet-Russian revolution by E.H. Carr: “the pattern [...] was not one, not of orderly progress, but of [...] advance by fits and starts – a pattern not of evolution but of intermittent revolution” (Carr 1970, 20). This depiction of the Russian revolution could very well be written about China’s rise. Counter to Ci Jiwei’s earlier interpretations, this chapter argues that Xi seeks

approximation to that early period of Mao Zedong (1953-1958). It does so by arguing that the de-Stalinisation as pursued by the Soviet Union under Khrushchev ultimately decided the divergent trajectories of the countries in question. Indeed, Mao rejected the de-Stalinisation as pursued by Khrushchev completely, so much so that the Great Leap Forward of 1957 essentially reflected a leftist turn of policy comparable to “revolutionary Stalinism” of the Soviet 1920s (Lüthi 2008, 78).

Above all else, de-Stalinisation essentially meant the abandonment of ‘Socialism in One Country,’ as it was exchanged for, as one author calls it, “bourgeois restoration.” Here again, there is a tendency to argue that Marxism “as a philosophy and as an economy theory has no relevance for social progress [and] has failed as such” (Das 1988, 1294-1295). Referring back to the question of Deng Xiaoping into the nature of socialism, Stalin’s interpretation of SCIO can be put against Trotsky’s concept of world revolution. Authors such as Khagen Das (1988) and Erik van Ree (2010) have put forward interesting analyses of the Soviet Union’s attempts at building “socialism in one, single country.” The focus is here on the question whether that endeavour contradicts the “internationalist, world-revolutionary perspective” of socialism and how Lenin’s early thought on the establishment of Socialism in One Country was interpreted by respectively Stalin and Leon Trotsky. In so doing, the legitimacy of China as being one of economic growth and national rejuvenation needs not contradict the Marxist-Leninist character of its polity nor the socialist goal of communism that China is aspiring to realise. Instead, the case of China’s rise, and particularly its sustained adherence to its Stalinist-Maoist legacy provides further evidence to the phantom menace of international communism. By employing socialism as a means of liberation and self-determination, that socialism was put in the service of national objectives.

In the light of such hard-won independence, it would be a contradiction to expect those delineated borders to be given up in exchange for the creation of a borderless society (Van Ree 2010, 1). In defining the goal of the socialist modernisation, then, China's official adoption of the 'primary stage of socialism' reflected the transitory and stage-based conceptualisation of socialist development. It was Karl Marx in his Critique of the Gotha Programme of 1875 who originally espoused on this idea, arguing that in the primitive (that is non-capitalist) societies, a phase of transition would be necessary for the proletariat to organise production, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (Marx 1875). Interesting here is that in Deng Xiaoping's time, the arrival of communism was reinterpreted as a centennial goal that is to take place over a hundred years, starting with the promulgation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 (Zhang; Chang 2015; C. He 2017).

Under Xi Jinping, this trend towards modernisation is particularly present in the reform of the institutional system, the reform of China's governance system, or the building and reform of party and state institutions that is recognised as the crucial development for the continuing rule of the CCP that, again, can be understood within that earlier mentioned dilemma of the Tocquevillian Paradox, and its inherent risk of the self-obsolescing authoritarian paradigm. It is important to understand institutional reform as it is used in the Chinese context in terms of political governance, rather than the economic transformation of the country (Feigenbaum 2018). A speech delivered by Xi Jinping and published in the CCP's theoretical magazine Qiu Shi called for the "adherence to and improvement of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics to promote the modernisation of the national governance system and governance capacities," in which the party's Secretary General noted that "institutional competition" constitutes the fundamental battle between countries." The superiority of the Chinese system, then, Xi Jinping continued, can be found in the historical heritage in which it is rooted and the

practical results that it thus far delivered (Xi 2020a). Here, the CCP's "long-term strategic task" is to strengthen the party's political responsibility and its historical mission, to strengthen its confidence, and move forward with adherence to, developing of, and the strict upholding of the country's governance system (Xi 2020a).

Wang Gang, the former Director of the General Office of the CCP between 1999 and 2007 here makes the distinction between the Chinese system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the effective governance over China by asking the question as to what extent the socialist system is effective in governing the country and what matters of China's system and the country's governance the CCP ought to "preserve and consolidate" or "improve and develop." Here, Wang re-affirms that the traditional conceptualisation of China's great unity can now be found with the united national governance under the CCP. As a result, the centralised leadership of the party, the Chinese people's contribution in spurring the development of the country, its economic growth and its speed of production more generally, and its commitment towards the realisation of socialist modernisation is what supposedly demonstrates the superiority of the socialist system in governing over China (2020).

In this regard, the CCP under Xi Jinping differs from the CPSU under Gorbachev, the latter who at the time of *Perestroika* voiced support for Soviet history, all the while "seeking a 'sharp break' with past practice." In so doing, George W. Breslauer notes, Gorbachev defined change as a "long-term process that [required] acclimatization to continuous change" (2002, 64). Instead, the rather more conservative interpretation of the Chinese socialist system and its ability to effectively govern over China differs from the progressive policies pursued by the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. After the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), respectively the parliamentary convention and its legislative consultative body that traditionally follows the Party Congress in

March of each year, Xi Jinping lauded China's 'new type of political party system' (Xinhua 2018; J. Cui 2018). Yet here, its rooting in Chinese history and as building on past economic success is rather more fanciful. Important will be to see how this party system is concretely put forward as an alternative to the Western liberal-democratic model (D. L. Yang 2017a).

The CCP's continued belief in the impending success of its aim for socialist modernisation is reflected in the academic field, which has shifted from the assertion in the 1990s against the West that *China Can Say No* (Song et al. 1996) and its successor *Unhappy China* (Song et al. 2009) to the present, more jubilant affirmation of the socialist success story in such expressions as "why Marxism works" and "why the CCP is able" (Xie 2019; Xinhua 2019c). More concretely, a clear narrative of different pathways and choices shows that the Soviet Union's demise is not a singular concern but rather, that it is mirrored by a belief that China's future need not and therefore will not be that of the USSR (Z. Li 2019; Zhang 2019).

These expressions fit within the perennial theme of socialist powers and the normative interpretation of eventual liberalisation for further economic growth. Importantly, should the socialist modernisation of China be fulfilled, it would present an unprecedented alternative answer to the *End of History* (see above). In this regard, Bruno Maçães notes the "numerous paths and [...] different visions of what a modern society looks like." As a result, this multitude of modernities demonstrates that the East-West divide is defined in time, not in space (2018b, 22-30; 33-36). The continuous effort of the Chinese Party-state to reform its domestic systems of governance to secure its "effective, long-term rule" builds on an unremitted faith in the Chinese path (Liao 2015). In so doing, the CCP is putting forward a solution to the question that has vexed the Chinese leadership at least from the late Qing dynasty's imperial rulership onwards, particularly when faced with a continued decline.



Questions at the time included “what [is] the proper path to a strong new China?” (Wright 1957, 5) or the rather more general one between saving the polity or the nation (Terrill 2003, 93). Under this last imperial dynasty of China, this question would take the form of the ‘Self-Strengthening Movement’ or the ‘Tongzhi Restoration’ of 1860 to 1874. The idea of ‘restoring China’ figured as an attempt to arrest the “process of decline” and extended Qing rule by another sixty years (Wright 1957, 43-67). Under Sun Yat-sen, the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 would prove that this solution was all but a temporary fix. In turn, the ruling KMT would, after coming to power in the period 1927-1928, be faced anew with the question of ruling a country that was faced with “economic decline, social dissolution, political incapacity and armed uprisings.” The KMT’s handling of this situation contributed to the CCP’s later coming to power (Wright 1955, 515).

The question of modernising China’s governance is an enduring challenge from the country’s imperial history, over the republican period, to the present. In this regard, the Fourth Plenum of the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress specifically focused on the CCP’s anti-corruption struggle, describing this campaign particularly in terms of the ‘successful road’ to escape the historical cycle of rise and fall (Xi 2020b). The Sino-Soviet Split above all demonstrates the central role of the communist party in the governance of both the USSR and the PRC. It is within this context that one ought to locate the current anti-corruption campaign of Xi Jinping (2012 to the present). Importantly, the centrality of this battle against corruption in contemporary China cannot be explained in terms of factional infighting but instead features as an attempt to counter the endemic problem that arguably presented the most direct cause for the CPSU’s fall from power.

Indeed, the corrosive effect of elite corruption works through on the CCP’s role as Leninist vanguard of the Chinese revolution. Nationalism is here to be understood as validating

the ideology of the state, even if that is a socialist one. Indeed, as Chalmers Johnson argues, Marxist-Leninist doctrine cannot exist on its own (C. A. Johnson 1963). Herein lies the risk that ideology becomes a mere self-legitimising tool for the elite (Pei 2002; Ringen 2016; J. Zeng 2016; Ci 2019), and the emergence of a new nobility or even a red aristocracy (Bloomberg 2012; Chan 2012). Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) faced a similar problem during the Chinese Civil War (1927-1937; 1945-1950).

While generally understood as China's nationalist party, its strand of nationalism was largely constricted to the elite leadership, thereby having a "head but no body" (C. A. Johnson 1963, 18). Particularly after the Japanese invasion in 1937, the battle for China became as much a battle for Chinese nationalism that, ironically enough, was won by the socialist CCP rather than the nationalist KMT. It is from here that previous studies describe the Chinese system as a "predatory state" (Pei 2009) as one of "crony capitalism" (Pei 2016), and, referring back to the problem of corruption, a "kleptocracy" (Wedeman 2018). Building on the above, authors such as Kerry Brown reject a factional interpretation of elite politics in China (and with it the anti-corruption struggle there), arguing that such an explanatory framework is unsatisfactory beyond the demonstration of personal links between Xi and his subordinates and how such personal links can aid in successful cooperation in future posts (K. Brown 2018b; C. Li 2016). In so doing, Brown describes the anti-corruption struggle as one serving a "predominantly political function, but one that is deeper than simply ensuring Xi's hold on power. It is, in fact, a fundamental tool to deliver sustainable one-party rule" (K. Brown 2018d). This continued popular support for the CCP is what authors Dali L. Yang and Lingnan He call "the enigma of political trust in China" (Dickson 2016; He, Lingnan; Yang 2019). Perhaps one of the best ways to perceive of the CCP is as serving its nationalist mandate of history, socialist modernisation harnessed for national rejuvenation (J. Zeng 2016). Do not forget the original aspiration, indeed.

## 4. Conclusion

China's rise traces a *Sonderweg* set against the normative example of liberal democracy as well as that of the Soviet Union. As the actors of socialist powers, the one-party systems enact the teleological promises embedded within their ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The failure of the CPSU to reproduce this ideology in the face of new societal forces, by consequence, led to a loss of central party control and, in so doing, gave rise to the crumbling of the Soviet Union. This process, while here described very briefly, is too often perceived as evidence for the liberalisation that would inevitably come at Fukuyama's (2006) end of history. Ideology, however, and the reproduction thereof continues to play a decisive role in the rise (and the fall) of socialist rising powers. Today, the China Dream serves as a reminder that it is only under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party that such a goal can be delivered. In an earlier time, Deng Xiaoping famously uttered the words "to get rich is glorious" but it was required "to let some people get rich first." Some four decades of economic boom followed this wisdom. Now, under Xi Jinping, China's economic growth is finally slowing down, yet that vision of glory is not any less present. In fact, with predictions of the Chinese nation's great rejuvenation, commentators are quick to envision a form of imperial revival, a renaissance of the Chinese empire as it were. Such approaches ultimately are ahistoric.

Instead, explanations ought to be sought in the communist ideal that is to be reached under the Marxist-Leninist thought of the CCP. A limited focus on 1978 as the beginning of China's rise in terms of economic growth, and a non-ideological, technocratic Party-state that facilitated it, risks misrepresenting that overarching goal of the Chinese Party-state. This approach is misguided, as the focus on continued economic growth seemingly prescribe a liberalisation (and eventual democratisation) of China. Instead, the continued rule of the CCP, whose seventy-year rule was recently celebrated with an impressive parade on the streets of

Beijing, is based on political-ideological legitimacy rather than economic growth. Yet whereas some see this seventieth anniversary as the ultimate litmus test, a threshold that the Soviet Union's CPSU could never cross; others argue that the Chinese economy's slowing growth demonstrates that even the CCP is now in fact living on borrowed time. While the need for change is here echoed by both sides of the debate, the divide is most strikingly centred upon the meaning of that concept of institutional reform. Whereas Deng's period stands characterised as one of 'reform and opening-up,' in the current epoch under Xi Jinping this slogan is modified to 'reform, development, and stability.' As a central concept, reform is here understood within the tradition of Leninism, that is the continued leadership of the central communist party.

However, in this new slogan, one can see an implicit recognition of the risks of political reform that are explained through the Tocquevillian Paradox. Here, the French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville notes that the most dangerous period for the government is exactly that time when the need for political reform is needed, since that very recognition negates the right of rule of that government.

As such, the literature identifies broadly three possible exits for the CCP. In a first scenario, the CCP is overthrown by popular revolt. A second possibility is where the CCP seeks to liberalise China's political system and ceases to exist as such. Thirdly, following the example of the KMT, the CCP spurs the emergence of a veritable multi-party system and joins it as one of many political parties. A fourth scenario, often not considered because of the presumed unsustainability of rule by socialist one-party states, is that the CCP will successfully navigate political and economic reform while keeping the tools of political rule firmly in its own hands. In so doing, the Chinese Party-state seeks to divert the fate of the communist leadership of the Soviet Union. With institutional inertia in the CPSU as the direct cause of the demise of its Soviet-Russian predecessor, a trend is identified beginning with the de-Stalinisation campaign

under Nikita Khrushchev. By consequence, the Sino-Soviet Split that followed in the period from 1955 to 1966 is seen as the beginning of the divergent trajectories between both polities, as it exposed the country to its eventual loss of power in 1989 to 1991. One could argue that instead of being a result of choices made during the 1980s, the Soviet Union was already doomed two or three decades earlier. Yet while the Cold War is often presented as an existential battle between the United States and the Soviet Union, little attention is ever paid to that primordial shift between the latter and the People's Republic of China.

Beyond this bilateral break, its impact on the subsequent struggle for respective satellite states between the two communist powers arguably defined the Cold War. This wrongful understanding of the true nature of the Cold War is working through today in the many misperceptions surrounding China's rise and particularly through a false perception of communism as one of international revolution that nevertheless has to meet its end since it lacks the prerequisite tools for a fruitful society. Further studies ought to investigate this relationship between the socialist ideology and how it came to be put in the service of the nationalist goal of restoring China, or how ideologies came to be channelled for national aspirations and struggles for self-determination and independence over the course of the Cold War more broadly. While it is true that the communist ideal was never reached, the socialist ideology that arguably serves as the means thereto has always been about the continued rule of the communist party, or the survival of the party more crudely put. Yet here, there is an interesting paradox between Xi's understanding that the governance institutions of China urgently need reform while at the same time demonstrating a rather more conservative assertion of China's past, both in terms of ancient history and its, rather more contemporary, economic success that started in the late 1970s. It is here that the Tocquevillian Paradox manifests itself most clearly.

# Chapter 3:

## China's Rise and the CCP's Original Aspiration: Solving the Party-state Dilemma for Survival

WHAT FUTURE ROLE is reserved for the socialist Party-state in China? This chapter explores how the party, under the leadership of Xi Jinping, is reproducing its revolutionary-ideological legitimacy towards realising China's rise towards 2049. It is a crucial period, particularly since there is a move closer from aspiration to actuality in China's rise that ought to be ensured for the next three decades at the least. This aspirational socialism (J. Brown 2021, 690–94) brings the CCP closer to the completion of its goals, upon which it now ought to deliver. To question the presumed inevitability of China's rise thus requires an understanding of the CCP as its primary agent and how it seeks to navigate this process as an organisation; as well as the (dis)continuities displayed by this party.

This chapter considers Chinese domestic politics as a fundamental characteristic of China's rise. It does so by following Blake Ewing, who describes politics as a temporal phenomenon, “the performativity [of which] is contingent [...] on the situational horizon of social actors” (2020, 1; see also Kato, 2021). In this reading, ideology can be interpreted as directly informing politics, not a false conscious but as ordering the world according to a strict orthodoxy that is *a priori* determined and can be adjusted as history unfolds. As a result, it is in politics that the highly elusive notion of ideology comes to the forefront and is performed through the temporal prescriptions of that belief system.

By contrast, it is often argued that ideology matters less and less over the course of Party-state as the CCP's in China. As Steven Saxonberg notes:

The communist regimes lose their grand-future oriented beliefs and instead promise improves living standards. Consequently they try to reach some sort of social contract with the population in order to induce it to “pragmatically accept” that *given certain external and internal constraints, the regime is performing reasonably well* (Saxonberg in Centeno, 2017, p. 103)

This description is indicative of a widely accepted interpretation of such regimes that stands at odds with the endurance of regimes motivated by the socialist ideology. Such assumptions put the Weberian, rational-legalistic model of public administration against that of these regimes, which are considered dysfunctional (Ang 2017a) and, for this reason, close to collapse. With regards to a Party-state as China's, it can be argued that the Party-state (or the political administration), from a normative perspective, can be seen as an aberration. A positive, instead of a normative approach is here more desirable as it allows the research to ask: what can be seen, what model exists there? (Ang 2017b; Clarke 2003; Svava 1998). The contemporary rise of China, as a socialist rising power, is a striking example. The question of the CCP's authoritarian resilience (Fewsmith; Nathan 2018) or durability (Levitsky; Way 2012), indeed its age or power, comes down to the question of Leninist organization: either for the creation of temporary stability or with pacification as a function of its regime (Ringen, 2016; see also D. L. Yang, 2017).

Indeed, for the Leninist party, “organization is the road to political power, but it is also the foundation of political stability and thus the precondition for political liberty. The vacuum of power [...] may be filled temporarily by charismatic leadership or by military force. But it can be filled permanently only by political organization” (Huntington 1968, 461). Moreover, Bohdan Harasymiw notes on the bureaucratic organisation: “Communism may be a doctrine of historical inevitability, but communists in power leave almost nothing to chance” (1969, p. 493).

While this chapter does not deal directly with the staffing and recruitment system of the CCP, it does refer to the ruling elite and its *nomenklatura* in terms of the potential risks of obsolescence for party and state. However, it is clear that the (s)election of officials at these meetings, under the guise of democratic centralism, is, of course, a direct betrayal of the democratic nature of these Party-states (Harasymiw 1969, 493). By virtue of their non-democratic character, at least in the liberal sense of the word, these authoritarian regimes are more impermanent than they appear to be and, as such, ought to continuously renew their ruling mandate (Lazar 2019, 6; Berlin 2004, 116).

The revolutionary-ideological manna from which such a renegotiation can be drawn, however, is a temporally finite source. One author interestingly distills the year, or in any event, the period around 2029 can be identified as the end of the CCP's ideological legitimacy, when the final claim can be made to any (familial) involvement in the Chinese revolution of 1927-1949 as a historical period (Ci 2019, 36). Referring to the evaporation of the historical basis for the CCP's anchoring of itself within Chinese society, the question emerges how the CCP under Xi Jinping will navigate past this point, continue to exist, and rule over China while doing so. The current attempt to rekindle this ideological legitimacy (see below) seeks to move beyond economic growth for growth's sake and to now bring about a qualitative change in Chinese society, again led by the CCP.

Throughout this thesis, reference is made to the CCP's position of ruling power as the Party-state. That concept is useful, for it summarises the post-1949 position of the CCP, but it is not entirely correct as it speaks to a basic problem in the relationship between party and state in China. In this regard, the Party-state is as much a unit of analysis (Shue 2018) as it is an evaluation of the dilemma of institutionalising the relative disposition between the revolutionary party and the bureaucratic organisation responsible for routine governance (S.



Zheng 1997, 1–22). As a shorthand, this chapter expands on the use of the term ‘Party-state’ to refer to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As a problematic concept, it is, however, necessary: to not conflate party and state (S. Zheng 1997, 9), not to neglect explaining the party (as a revolutionary organisation) or the state (as an institutional process coming from the Party), as well as not to confuse direct top-down control of the state by the party as the alternative wording of single-party state suggests. Instead, ‘Party-state’ is more useful to describe the contemporary state of party and state relations in China.

Does the CCP want to solve this institutional dilemma, thereby risking its obsolescence? The answer to this question suggests itself. Much more interesting would be to perceive the CCP’s relative position towards the Chinese state and society as a “revolutionary mass movement under single-party auspices” (Tucker, 1961, p. 283; see also Wiles, 1961). These movement regimes move, once in power, to manipulate state organs for their own ideological pursuits (Schoenhals 1999). Rather than suggesting a top-down relationship between party and state, it is important to also consider the people and how the population of China serves as a source of legitimacy for the CCP. The existential dilemma facing the CCP as such goes far beyond crisis-management frameworks (Baum 1994; Tobin 2020) which present the Party-state as reactive-defensive rather than its proactive-offensive opposite.

Instead, to interpret this political system it is necessary to understand the ideological nature and its political character (and the different tendencies therein towards totalitarianism) (see Arendt 2017). The Party-state dilemma [党国困境], as explored below, is clear in the succession issue during the contemporary period under the leadership of Xi Jinping. With rejuvenation hinging on the health of an ageing statesman, the lack of a clear successor, much more than the prospect of a dull bureaucratic that is set to take over illustrates the risk.

## 1. The Party-state dilemma in China's rise

With regards to the study of illiberal Party-states, it is more analytically useful to define these in the negative: through their opposition to statism, capitalism, and imperialism. It leads authors such as Stephen Kotkin to conclude that despite the common dismissal of China's nominal communist system, this ideology ought to be taken seriously (2020). An extension of this logic learns that such regimes are dysfunctional (Garver in Tobin, 2020, 3), ideologically obsolete (Steinfeld 2010), and therefore, close to collapse (see earlier). It is a tendency pervasive in the study of illiberal regimes at least since the downfall of communism in Europe and Russia during the period 1989-1991 and after (Kotkin 2023).

In the study of China's rise, this sentiment can be summarised as follows: "the problem-based [research agenda] sees the party's rule as lurching from crisis to crisis [thereby rendering the system] not well-equipped to cope with the massive economic and social changes unleashed by market reforms" (Tobin 2020, 2). Presenting the Chinese Party-state in this way focuses too narrowly on "challenges of day-to-day governance and of crisis response, the mechanisms of domestic control, and the Party's political succession processes, but [without] a sense of the strategic agency of the Party's leaders," let alone the direction in which these officials seek to take China (Tobin 2020, 3). In China's rise to power, however, the Party is presented as so fundamental not only for its own future as an organisation, but for China as a nation writ large.

### The CCP's Problem of Legitimacy and Representation

For dictatorships such as the CCP, this constant (re)negotiating of their own legitimacy by the official elite emerges as a basic problem. It is but little surprise, then, that the Party-state is presenting its version of democracy, that is *with Chinese characteristics*, as even more democratic than the procedural one and, as such, also more legitimate. Think for example of

the concept of ‘whole-of-process people’s democracy’ [过程人民民主] which describes the CCP’s representation of its citizenry from the local (sub-district) level all the way to the central level in Beijing, where decisions are then made in accordance with these inputs. It is, of course, not a contradictory statement to note that China is democratic. Neither in form (as the people’s democratic dictatorship [人民民主专政]) nor in function (democratic centralism [民主集中制]), the PRC does hold true to a traditional reading of democracy as rule by the majority. Simplistic in its reading of the concept, such a depiction also does not account for the repressive nature of central control at the grassroots level of society (Y. Yuan 2021; Xu; Leibold; Impiombato 2021) and the corrosive effect this presence has on the state of democracy there (Mittelstaedt 2021; Benney 2016).

With over ninety million members, the CCP can lay claim to the title of the biggest political party in the world. Party membership metrics are however not a useful indicator to measure the health of a state’s democratic character (Groth 1979, 205; L. L. P. Gore 2015, 204). Even as a relative share of the Chinese population, let alone that of the world, this number is but little revealing. It is, thus, not a priori true that because the CCP is the biggest party in the world, it is the best representative and, therefore, most democratic. The dictator’s question of legitimacy is unresolved by such claims to be a representative democracy. Instead, what emerges here is a populist reasoning building not so much on a generalised people (as a mass; see below) but even more so on the ever more important notion that it is, above all, the CCP that represents the people (Wildt 2019). This notion is an interesting interpretation of the ideal of popular sovereignty that, true to the party’s role as the vanguard of the revolution, temporarily ought to rest with the political organisation. As will be explored below, the mass line [群众路线] is in this regard a fundamental concept that combines popular participation with an ability for the Party-state to retain its surveillance (A. Smith 2021, 794).

More relevant for this chapter is to identify the basic dilemma that prohibits a solution to the dictator's problem of legitimacy. Legitimacy can here be drawn in equal measure from the military and from the people as that generalised mass. One answer to Ringen's perennial question into the nature of the CCP's position within Chinese society (see earlier) may then be to quite literally put forward the guiding principle that adorns the gates of Zhongnanhai: "*To serve the People*" [为人民服务]. The method by which the CCP seeks to do so is through the mass line, a set of tools through which the Party-state can inform itself about what concerns the people and inform its policies. A Maoist concept, it prescribes a life of sacrifice for party members and is most heard in a military context but also applying to the struggle for socialism more generally. This warrior spirit, extended to all party members as the CCP's political soldiers, grants a vision on the CCP's legitimacy coming from among the people. It is therefore evident that the CCP can simultaneously be illiberal, democratic, and legitimate.

The debate on the role of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) within the political construct of the PRC that is a party-army-state is here irrelevant (Saunders, Phillip C.; Scobell, 2015; see also Mattingly, 2021). More interesting is to consider the Chinese people within the delineated territorial space of the PRC's borders as a source of power. In the philosophical tradition, Michel Foucault already noted the reversal from the sovereign's relationship to the subjects, to the people as a "technical-political object of management and governance" (Foucault 2007, 98). Applying this idea to the post-1949 Chinese context, the CCP presented itself as acting on behalf of the Chinese people, with the "right of sovereignty [proceeding] from the territory that the people occupied" (Howland 2012, 3). Following the Stalinist interpretation of the nationality question, confronting a nation at risk of being broken apart by foreign intervention with the minority nationalities (Howland 2011, 178), Mao became preoccupied with the state building implications presented by the question of those minorities

mostly residing at the frontiers of the nation. The building of socialism within the boundaries of one nation, thus, held fundamental consequences for the goal of world communism.

### Theorising the Party-state Dilemma

The problem of population in territories as diverse as the Soviet Union and the PRC, thus, ought to confront the tension between a “Chauvinism” of the dominant ethnic group (Howland 2011) and those various national minorities. It is within this context that policies of assimilation are to be interpreted. However, the objective of developing these frontier regions serves clear security concerns. The socialist civilising mission of upgrading and socialising these presumably backward cultures (David-Fox 1999, 182) by the Party-state is thus not so unequivocally altruistic. Even in 2014, Xi Jinping noted that:

It is correct to argue that development is the first priority and the basis for achieving long-term peace and stability. However, it cannot be assumed that all problems will be solved once development is achieved, and it can be concluded that this is not the case in Xinjiang. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were relatively developed regions. Consequently, they were the first to break free from the Soviet Union. The Yugoslavian Federation was a country with a good economic and standard of living, but at the end it also fell apart. Xinjiang developed rapidly over these years, the living standard of its people improved, but ethnic separatism and violent terrorism are still on rising ever further.

我们说，发展是第一要务，是实现长治久安的基础这是对的，但不能认为发展起来了一切问题就能迎刃而解了，可以断定在新疆不是这种情况。立陶宛、拉脱维亚、爱沙尼亚原来都是经济相对发达的地区，结果率先退出苏联。南斯拉夫联邦原来是经济水平和生活水平都不错的国家，最后也分崩离析了。新疆这些年发展速度很快、人民生活水平不断提高，但民族分裂活动和暴力恐怖活动仍然呈上升趋势 (Xi, 2014, pp. 6–7; own translation, A.D.).

It can be argued that the problem of legitimacy for the CCP is a direct result of the lack of open and competitive elections in the constitutional sense of the word (Hill 2019, 192–218). The contrary is true, however. Chinese democracy, as a recent white paper is a people’s democracy that:

Whole-process people's democracy integrates process-oriented democracy with results-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy, and people's democracy with the will of the state. It is a model of socialist democracy that covers all aspects of the democratic process and all sectors of society. It is a true democracy that works.

全过程人民民主，实现了过程民主和成果民主、程序民主和实质民主、直接民主和间接民主、人民民主和国家意志相统一，是全链条、全方位、全覆盖的民主，是最广泛、最真实、最管用的社会主义民主 (SCIO 2021).

It is a traditional reading of democracy as majoritarian, whereby the people's democratic dictatorship is one in which "a tiny minority is sanctioned in the interests of the great majority, and 'dictatorship' serves democracy" (SCIO 2021). It is undeniable and not at all contradictory to follow this logic of democracy as defined by the Chinese authorities. In fact, the people's democracy as it is stated here draws directly from the mass line, the "organizational construct [at] the heart of the Chinese revolution [that reflects] a viewpoint from among the masses [...] to find political expression and [that is] to be asserted from the solidity of a strong political base" (Mitch Meisner 1978, 27–28). The provision of a better livelihood is thus a process whereby the welfare needs of the people are to be gauged and brought about by the Party-state, based on its "materialist view that people have objective interests [which] can be grasped subjectively through practical experience [...] in the context of 'revolutionary practice'" (Mitch Meisner 1978, 27–28).

Following the introduction of market reforms, a seemingly "de-ideologized mass line" (Korolev 2017) emerged together with the arrival of a more, however short-lived technocratic Chinese elite that seemingly traded in ideological for performative legitimacy. While the (in)ability to provide for the welfare of the population is arguably one of the most important *raison d'être* for political parties, the impact of neoliberalism on leftist parties (Mudge 2018) – and, by extension others on the left side of the political spectrum, including socialist Party-states, is a worrisome development in the context of the CCP's continuing existence. It is an inherent risk for ideological survival, with a goal of achieving the communist goal of red plenty

(Spufford 2010) through the market economy. Clearly, the communist utopia may not be ironically dismissed as one of equality in poverty, but ought to be taken seriously as a process that can be particularly difficult for the socialist party to achieve. Indeed, the impact of neoliberalisation on the state is, to some, the same as a transformation of the socialist state to the Western model (Lemaître 2021). It is an argument most commonly made in the engagement-with-China debate which is treated earlier (A. I. Johnston 2019) but which, problematically, does not include calculations of survival on the part of the Party-state itself.

The Party-state dilemma and the neoliberalisation of the state can be perceived as equal in its undermining of party survival. Whereas the former essentially leads to a compromise between party and state in terms of the routinisation of government bureaucracy, so too does the relationship between party and market puts capitalist ambitions of profit against the preservation of party rule. It is a question most visible in common representations of the Chinese economy as state capitalism, or the “mixed [economy] in which the state retains a dominant role amidst the presence of markets and private firms.” Since the late 2000s, however, increased “Party-state-activism” can here be perceived (Pearson et al. 2021, 2). The development of “market-driven socioeconomic change and its transformative impact on the CCP, indeed “the fate of the political elite,” follows much the same trajectory” (L. L. P. Gore 2015, 205–7). Think of the China’s future as either following the North Korean model (a strong state with a weak economy); or the Singapore model (a strong state with a strong economy) (Pei 2021; Liu; Wang 2018; Thompson; Ortmann 2018).

The emergence of a non-ideological state, solely concerned with economic growth would then lead to the obsolescence by default of the party and its ideology. The future question for the CCP is, then, not to pursue performative over ideological legitimacy but re-establishing its central control during a time in which the transformations of Chinese society increasingly

clash with the Leninist party structure of the CCP and its incentives for subsistence. This quest for “authoritarian accommodation” (L. L. P. Gore 2015), or the CCP’s renegotiating of its place within Chinese society through more repressive measures than those which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union puts a middle path between the either-or question of victory or collapse, resilience or decline that this thesis problematises. It is here interesting to note that the latter’s “reform communism” was merely a “European and Russian phenomenon [which] failed to exert substantial influence over communists outside Europe” (Pons; Di Donato 2017, 179). On the question of legitimacy, and particularly the CCP’s relative position towards the Chinese state and society, a slogan such as serving the people does not denote the sovereignty of that people. The CCP emerges as the sole and self-proclaimed representative. This populist nature of the Party-state is the missing link that is often missing in the debate on its legitimacy (theoretically explored in Tang, 2016, pp. 152–165).

The main problem, or indeed the chronic crisis, of the CCP can be called the ‘Party-state dilemma.’ It refers to the tension between the party as the leader of a revolutionary movement and the indispensable nature of the state as organising the governance after the revolution. In other words, there is an inherent tendency of the (temporary) dictatorship of the people to become a dictatorship of the party and its functionaries into perpetuity; much like it happened prior to the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1989-1991 (Voslensky 1980; Amalrik 1970; Bond, n.d.). A related problem here is that the party may survive in form (as a Leninist and, therefore, revolutionary one-party state) rather than in substance (no longer guided by Marxism and its class consciousness). Such a decline of ideology would, in turn, lead to the emergence of a “post-communist authoritarian state” much as what happened in the Russian Republic after the fall of the Soviet Union (Kotkin, 2020; see also Zheng, 1997, p. 3). At present, however, there is an active reckoning undertaken by the CCP to stave off the same fate of the Soviet



Union before it. It does so by going back to what it quite literally calls the original aspiration of the revolution, in an attempt to rejuvenate the ideological legitimacy through which it rules over the nation.

## **2. *‘Después del triunfo:’ The Original Aspiration of the Revolution***

Claims to deliver on primarily economic performance and its derivatives did not solve the issue of Party-state responsiveness to societal woes, let alone representation. For this reason, that since the leadership of Hu Jintao, and particularly under Xi Jinping, the mass line re-emerged as a central guiding concept. In so doing, it can be argued that the CCP is seeking to consolidate its character as the people’s representative (of which it is the only one) over the state as a source of legitimacy. Nevertheless, the Party-state dilemma is endemic to revolutionary parties and their assumption of state power upon coming into power. With the expansion of functions beyond (armed) opposition, the requirement emerges for these movements to become a bureaucratic organisation to deliver effective governance. In so doing, the risk exists that the communist party retains its form but not its function; not in the least through the neoliberal pursuit of economic growth as led by the state (see earlier). A great illustration of this point can be derived from critiques on the bureaucratisation of the revolution, which point to the emergence of an ideological nomenklatura as the ruling elite in socialist regimes (Voslensky 1980). With this coda derived from the non-European context, it illustrates the importance of considering revolutionary success as a formative element for the party even after decades of power.

Indeed, it may be argued, revolutionary victory becomes the founding myth of the Party-state and its triumphalism, for the fledgling as well as the contemporary state, a historical source of legitimation. The world after the fall of the USSR in Russia and Europe can be better described as post-Soviet rather than post-communist, since the ideology lives on in parts of

Latin America and, for the current purposes, Asia (Pons, Silvio; Di Donato 2017). The endurance of such regimes runs counter to the argument that history ended (Fukuyama 2006), at least the mistaken notion that it is associated with. By considering China not as a unique case, but by letting the imagination be enriched by the theoretical cases of the other illiberal – if socialist or communist – states allow for a greater inquiry into their persistence. The sentiment of *después del triunfo de la revolución*, then, illustrates a formative event in the revolution and the creation of the Party-state. In the case of China, the year 1949. What follows is described as the “transformation of the old society; [...] the consolidation of the revolutionary regime; [and] inclusion: attempts by the party elite to expand the internal boundaries of the regime's political, productive, and decision-making systems, to integrate itself with the non-official (i.e., *non-apparatchik*) sectors of society rather than insulate itself from them” (Kenneth Jowitt 1975, 69). Applying the Jowittian scheme to the Chinese case, the transformation of Chinese society in the period 1953-1957 and after is considered in the previous chapter (Dikötter 2019). Interestingly, Fewsmith argues that Maoist China skipped the consolidating phase amid the various ideological campaigns (Fewsmith 2021, 109–10). At present, the integrative phase is described as a process of authoritarian accommodation (L. L. P. Gore 2015).

### **Diagnosing the Party-state Dilemma in China**

A paradigm within China Studies that only recently is being reconsidered is the institutionalisation of Chinese politics following the reform period that started in 1978. Here, the Chinese bureaucracy is considered as shorthand for the Chinese (Party-state) government. The uneasy tension between party and state, with political power heavily eschewed in favour of the former, however, reveals that this process of regulating party politics is not yet solved (for recent discussions of this topic, see Torigian 2022; Fewsmith 2021). It forms the basis of this chapter's exploration of the Party-state dilemma. Institutional approaches necessarily look

beyond the Chinese communist revolution of 1927-1949 since it is the CCP's triumph within this civil war that allowed the party to take up the governance of China. It is a phase that naturally follows upon the successful conclusion of a revolution by the revolutionary party (see earlier) and which is followed by its transformation into a governing party. This process gives rise to the use of the concept of Party-state as a common denominator for government regimes led by a single party. China's, particularly again under Xi Jinping, is here a particularly interesting case because of its pervasive ambitions (party cells in all layers of state, military, and society; captured in the slogan of the party leading all [党是领导一切的]); leading to considerations of a growing (pre-)totalitarianism in Chinese society (Pei 2021; Feldman 2021).

Absent a democratic mandate but a popular one that is closely aligned with the historical role of the CCP in the revolution, the party is faced with the recurrent problem of institutionalising the relationship between party and state. To retain its ruling position, the single party not only ought to prevent the emergence of liberal institutions, it also has to employ pseudo-democratic ones to reproduce itself (see earlier). There is, of course, a question of the normality of such regimes (Shlapentokh 2017). The National People's Congress [中华人民共和国全国人民代表大会, NPC], China's national legislature, for example, is often criticised as a "rubber-stamp parliament" (AFP 2019). It may very well be an assembly of endorsement, yet its function is of existential importance for the party's survival. Because of the non-institutionalised nature of Party-state relations in China to be continuously renegotiated by the party through periodical congresses plenums of the state parliament and the party lest it loses its hold on power (Lazar 2019, 6).

A related research puzzle, to which this chapter does not seek to provide an answer, but which is illustrative for its comparative perspective, ask why the Vietnamese Party-state relative to the Chinese case "adopted the more institutionally constrained system, although the two

countries began with virtually the same party template and, in fact, Vietnam even had Chinese and Soviet help in installing it.” Indeed, the way in which “these different institutional architectures,” or the lack thereof, lead to different outcomes is an interesting query that is illuminating for the present purposes (Malesky 2021, 164). Statebuilding is as much a continual process (S. Zheng 1997, 3–22), as the Party-state dilemma itself is. Indeed, the coming into power of a triumphant revolutionary party does not solve this predicament by moving into the state offices and, as it were, for the leadership to take its seat on the throne, whether that is a presidential one or otherwise. The requirement to institutionalise Party-state relations, as well as its simultaneous rejection in favour of the party as a (revolutionary) movement, then, makes it an existential question.

The process that emerges (see below) is what can be called the *partification* [党化], state retreat and party advance [国退党进] (Shen et al. 2020); or *Gleichschaltung* between party, state, and society sacrificing any previous plurality in public life for the establishment of a unitary state led by the central party, leading to the creation of the Party-state construct. This dilemma between party and state revolves around the question of governance and how to fill in that governing responsibility alongside the party’s revolutionary fundamentals. It is an essential problematic of legitimacy, both ideologically and performatively speaking, which requires an urgent answer for the contemporary CCP. As explored below, the different forms of totalitarian government are all creations to counter this specific dilemma and it is these early beginnings that hold the grounds for possible collapse.

Similarly, in a perhaps more metaphysical description of that very same problem, the revolutionary Party-state cannot shed its ideological legitimacy in favour of performative legitimacy. This dilemma is best illustrated by the fear for a Soviet-style collapse of the Chinese Party-state: from the downfall of the regime to the popular protests that followed, to the

establishment of the Russian Federation. Here, the rise of the oligarchs and particularly the transitional role for the Committee for State Security (KGB) is important for it illustrates the role of corruption (Amalrik, 1970, pp. 141–144; see also Belton, 2020). Steps towards this policy are already visible in Xi’s anti-corruption campaign (K. Brown 2018d) as well as the political purges that come with it (G. Wu 2020). Clearly, the CCP is presently concerned with avoiding such a denouement to unfold through a strengthening of the party over the state (S. Zheng 1997, 3–22). In seeking to bring about exactly the reverse scenario, the party is spurring a revolution from above (Tucker 1999, 77–108). A very fitting description of such a move comes from Spain of the early 1900s. This context is for the further development of this chapter irrelevant, yet its description of such a state-led revolution is fitting for the contemporary Chinese case:

Now more than ever, it is necessary for the nation to feel that *public power* is attending to its needs and to set out on the *road to that regeneration* so vainly chanted in all languages. There is no longer time either for order or for method’ we cannot proceed with parsimony in the accomplishment of the work; the revolution must be made from the Government, for if not, it will be made from below and it will be desolate, ineffective and shameful, and probably the dissolution of the [...] nation. To bring this revolution to the people is to instantly restore the people’s self-confidence (quoted in Suárez Cortina, 2006, p. 167; own translation and emphasis, A.D.).

Such a description of the *revolución desde arriba* is here useful for it puts the attention on the crucial connection to regeneration of the nation or, in Xi Jinping’s China, its rejuvenation. In this regard, the risk of ideological obsolescence of the CCP is a serious matter of concern, not in the least for party functionaries themselves. It is a direct result of the revolutionary party’s success which, once etched upon an existing state bureaucracy, is henceforth responsible for the governance of a country (see earlier). This Party-state system of governance is not merely a top-down system between a party organisation and the state structure. Instead, the degree of institutionalisation can be characterised by the distinct system [系统] of “vertical functional hierarchies” within the Chinese Party-state (Lieberthal; Oksenberg 1988, 141). Rather than a

flaw, it is a token of the system whereby the different levers of power are not separated, but instead can be perceived as political-legal constructs as in the case of the judiciary and so forth.

One characteristic of this system is of course the relationship between these “vertical functional systems” and the “horizontal territorial governing bodies” such as provincial, municipal, or country governments. It leads to a particular problem called *tiaotiao kuaikuai* [条条块块] which “inhibits direct communication and cooperation between functional units under different ministries, as these units are parts of different *xitong*” (Lieberthal; Oksenberg 1988, 141–42). This particular dynamic of course refers to China’s dual-leadership system of Party and state [双重领导] (Bai; Liu 2020; Blair 2016). The centralisation of political power under Xi Jinping is here to be understood as a tightening of the vertical axis (Fewsmith 2021, 172). The Party-state dilemma can, thus, be described as the power relationship between party and state, not as direct control from the top. It is also the reason behind the process of the party advances, the state retreats (Shen et al. 2020; see earlier); and the creation of party cells through all layers of society (P. M. Thornton 2013; Grünberg; Drinhausen 2019).

As a fundamental problem for the CCP, however, the Party-state dilemma cannot be neglected in terms of the PRC’s and particularly the CCP’s longevity and durability as proof for the success of China’s rise (see below). Considerations of age and/or power assume that either (or both) are evidence for the inevitable and successful completion of China’s rise and, therefore, are merely a variation upon the theme of *Sinophrenia* (see earlier). Regenerating the party(-state) from above, thus presents a distinct temporal view revealing a continual renewal of that construct. The festive occasions that mark these events, yearly for the state, five-yearly for the party but particularly in terms of decades) can then not be seen as evidence for endurance but only for the dormant ability to remain in power. Speaking on the presumed shift from ideological to performative legitimacy, Tony Saich aptly summarised this point as follows. “[As]

belief in Marxism-Leninism declines as a source of its legitimacy, the CCP loses its power to explain development by relying on its ‘supernatural ability’ to divine current and future trends [leading] citizens to judge performance on more earthly criteria” (2021, 456).

The belief in performative over ideological legitimacy in the study of the CCP and China’s rise receives ample attention in the concept of ‘authoritarian resilience’ (Nathan 2003; Fewsmith; Nathan 2018). It is a belief in the post-communist state of China that is performative rather than ideological. Building on this understanding, this paradigm is also suggested as a new framework to study Chinese politics (Fewsmith 2021). Here, the organisational structure of the CCP, rather than its ideology, is proposed to bring in a new understanding of the topic. Authors like Fewsmith note the overwhelming importance of elite struggle over institutionalisation in deciding the course of Chinese politics. The analysis is here, however, limited to that elite struggle, presenting such political infighting as institutional rather than as a organisational-reproductive one. While it is true that Leninism can be perceived of in its broadest sense to include centralisation of political power, ideology, as well as the penetration of society (Fewsmith 2021, 186); there is also an inherent risk to overstate the Leninist orientation of the party at the behest of its Marxist outlook. Such an approach finds expression in such concepts as ‘Market Leninism’ (Pieke, 2007), ‘Mercantilist Leninism’, as well as ‘Consultative Leninism’ (Tsang 2009), each describing a particular part of the Chinese Party-state but without appreciating fully the ideological foundations upon which it sits.

In taking organisational form over institutional function, the question of the CCP’s political power is cast in terms of form over substance. Moreover, in discussing China from the viewpoint of the market or the consultative nature of its parliament (see earlier), there is little to no understanding of the detrimental influence of either of those two forces on the party itself: an organisation that remains highly ideologically inspired; and whose vision of history is thus

guided by a material outlook drawing directly from Marxism. In this case, in what Fewsmith calls the pathologies of Reform Leninism (2021, pp. 109–130) the necessary constraints on power that are built into an institutionalised system are emphasised; while also not that the process of institutionalisation sits within a “weak state bureaucracy, a mere appendage to a powerful political organization” (2021, pp. 14; 109–130). While rethinking the (in)formal rules of such Chinese politics, it is important to consider the party as first and foremost structuring that field. Because of the loose institutionalisation of the state, preventing the consistent transfer of power, the Party-state risks being subject to the mercy of a strongman leader.

The collective leadership of the party’s Politburo and its Standing Committee is here a particularly useful example. Lauded as an innovation by Deng Xiaoping in the post-Mao period, this configuration of political power would make the Chairman of the CCP only the *primus inter pares* among his colleagues. The power struggle of Deng Xiaoping after 1976 himself suggests of course a different reading (Fewsmith, 2021, p. 30; see also Torigian, 2017). However, it certainly stands opposed to the centralisation of power through institutional and legal means, furthering the idea of ruling the country according to the law [全面依法治国] that is taking place under Xi Jinping. Such a move puts further questions on the ideological or legal nature of power under the Chinese President. The power imbalance that emerged stands in direct opposition to the earlier held belief that Chinese politics could be characterised by a degree of institutionalisation (Fewsmith 2021, 1–18), that is: a “political system [...] in which leadership can be passed from one leader to another without power struggles because there is a widely accepted decision-making rule.” Note that the author calls these norms, not institutions (Fewsmith 2021, 2; 115).



## Renewing the Revolutionary-ideological Ideal

While an analysis of the institutional centralisation of power is interesting in its own regard (see Fewsmith, 2021, pp. 131–156; Lee, 2017), this chapter is more interested in the renewals of the Chinese Party-state as a push under Xi Jinping to reinvigorate the revolutionary-ideological ideal of the party itself. It is a move that finds instruction in the political slogan of “*Do Not Forget the Original Aspiration, Remember the Mission*” [不忘初心牢记使命, often summarised as 初心使命] (Xi 2019d; 2019b; Lam 2019) as it calls for a reinvigorated mobilisation of the people that is centred around the CCP is crucial for bringing the party back to its revolutionary-ideological ideal. Such a movement mentality, presenting the party as a movement ahead of the state (Muldoon, James; Rye 2020; Schoenhals 1999) highlights the governance of China by the CCP both as a result and as a problem of its victory in the revolution. The slogan consists of two parts and found expression in subsequent campaigns to firstly, avert historical nihilism [历史虚无主义] (Matten, n.d.) through the study of CCP history [党史学习教育] and, secondly, ensure that the mantle of the revolution is carried forward by those of “good revolutionary genes” [传承好红色基因] (Xi 2021a).



**Image 6.** A stele celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, carrying the slogan not to forget about the party’s original aspiration (Image credit: A.D.)]

With regards to that revolution, it requires differentiating between the Chinese Revolution of 1911 as an uprising against the Qing imperial state and the communist revolution of 1949 as it grew out of the Chinese Civil War (1927-1949). Tony Saich describes this revolution as a “[transformation of the] economic and social structures as well as the political institutions [...] to bring power to those oppressed by the old regime and to those who would enjoy greater satisfaction, both material and spiritual under the new mode of production and its socialist relations” (2021, pp. 15–16). The original aspiration is, thus, that revolutionary-ideological ideal that emerged as a result of the socialist break in history that this thesis described earlier. Indeed, after 1949, the socialist revolution introduced new thinking into Chinese society and the organisation thereof, concerning social production as well as its associated outlook of history that is considered within these pages. By renewing the importance of this revolution as a fundamental and formative aspect of China’s rise (as a socialist rising power), this policy seeks to renew the party’s mandate to rule by once again laying claim on its ideological beginning.

It is a reckoning with decades of economic growth as brought about by this particular mode of social production but which now, according to the logic of dialectics, ought to undergo a qualitative change towards that economic, social, and political transformation of China as envisioned by 2049. While China is indeed “doing very well” (S. Zheng 1997, 3), economic growth cannot quite simply continue forever nor is it the crucial question of the communist revolution. By this logic, China’s rise can be understood as the unfinished revolution of 1949. The question for the CCP, as a visibly organised party, does not concern more or less power but the manner in which that Party-state can retain power to rule and see this rising trajectory through to the end; or see it slip from its grasp. It is here that the Party-state dilemma manifests itself most clearly, as visible in the fragmented nature of the CCP institutionally (Mertha 2009),

geographically (Chung 2016), as well as globally (Jones, Lee; Hameiri 2021). In other words, the Party-state dilemma can be perceived of as a “problem of mobilization vs. institutionalization” but with *partiinosť* [党性, party-mindedness] always as the ultimate objective (Huntington 1968, 339–40). In other words, the “static administration of the state [is set against] the dynamic leadership of the party” (Unger 2005, 441–42). Where the mobilisation of the nation is concerned, the CCP is able to circumvent the state structure and draw its legitimacy directly from the people. It can be discussed whether such a populist approach is useful or not, however, it is interesting to consider this in light of what Fewsmith called the Chinese Party-state’s “[skipping] of the [Jowittian] consolidation phase and directly [entering] the ‘inclusionary phase’ [integrating] itself with [...] its host society [and recognising] societal interests” (Fewsmith, 2021, 109–110; see also above).

In contemporary Chinese politics, this characteristic of the relationship between Party-state and society in China found expression in the concept of the “matters of national importance” [国之大者] (Bishop 2021). The concept refers to the people leading happy and prosperous lives [人民生活幸福] as the original aspiration of the Party-state. The populist appeal, whereby the Chinese people are presented as the supposed sovereigns of the country [人民当家作主] (W. Tian 2021), is much revealing for the CCP’s relationship to Chinese society, its sources of legitimacy, and from which it draws its very *raison d'état*. Similarly, it also portrays “THE party” (Jowitt, 1993, 290; emphasis in original) as of the people, for the people, and by the people. In so positioning the party above the state structure itself, brings further attention to the ambition to reform the party’s rule over the state in favour of the former (Huntington 1968, 334–35). Rather than a regime that is on the brink of collapse or, at least, nearing a transition to a more accountable form of government, it is interesting to note that the Chinese leadership still makes ample reference to the Chinese Revolution of 1927-1949; or,

indeed, pre-PRC China. Rather than a return to the early days of the Chinese revolution, notably the Maoist period, Xi's is a different approach. However, considering commentaries that see in the Xi period a revival of the old Maoist ideals, if not policies, it is important to consider how the immediate post-revolutionary period of 1953-1958 (see Chapter 1) ought to be understood during this contemporary period of CCP rule.

Those years of struggle are formative for the CCP. That *Kampfzeit*, which started during and after the hardship of the Long March [长征] and to the present day serves as a mobilisation factor employed by the Chinese Party-state (Nakazawa 2019):

Today, we are on a new Long March to realise the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The majority of the party cadres must remember the party's ideals, beliefs, and fundamental purposes. They must carry forward the great spirit of the Long March [and] the revolutionary war years. This spirit of daring to fight and not being afraid of difficulties, the courage to overcome all obstacles, risks, and challenges, and strive to win new victories for socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era (Ren 2019).

In the next 70 years, the key is the next 30 years," as it is the period for China to realize the goals of establishing an overall well-off society and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi said (S. Yang 2019).

The discrepancy between the seventieth anniversary of the PRC in 2019 and the hundredth-year one of the CCP in 2021 is noticeable. With both events celebrated as evidence for the endurance of the Party-state as a whole, the longevity of the party cannot be considered proof for the survival of the Chinese state as such. Indeed, it is important to the CCP during 1927 and 1949 as "surviving decades of military warfare, [and from there developing] a set of organizational features" (S. Zheng 1997, 16). However, the yet elusive goal of bringing the PRC as led by the CCP to its elusive anniversary of 2049 is perceived as a lengthy road riddled with obstacles along the way: a fitting description for the Chinese official perception of China's rise. While this thesis reserves an exploration of the call for revolutionary struggle under Xi for a different place, it is important to note the ideological battle that it puts forward. It implies endurance and perseverance, indeed even happiness, for it is a righteous goal and renders those willing to take up the fight political soldiers.

The ambition is clear: the CCP ought to preserve political power at all costs. Xi Jinping summarised this objective in 2019 as follows: “As the world’s biggest political party, there are no external forces that can overthrow us. The only organisation that can bring us down, are ourselves” [我们党作为世界第一大党，没有什么外力能够打倒我们，能够打倒我们的只有我们自己] (Xi 2019b). While this assertion of the party’s primacy is in line with analyses that see any threat of coup or, in any event, the overthrow of the existing regime as coming from the inside (Gilley 2004; Garside 2021); it goes against the general interpretation of China’s rise as being one of economic growth and the assumption that it is only by overtaking the US economy, that China’s rise will be completed. Instead, to perceive of China’s rise as a revolutionary-ideology development puts the focus on a relatively novel interpretation of this rising trajectory, as it is dependent on the revolutionary manna.

That China’s rise stands at the cusp of a new era under Xi Jinping can, then, be taken quite literally. As explored in Chapter 1, the dialectics of China moving forward along a linear path are clear: with the Chinese economy moving from high-speed to high-quality; China’s rise moves in tandem from a strategic window of opportunity (banking on decades-long economic growth) to a period of historical transition (see earlier). This interpretation marks a clear break with the earlier held beliefs with regards to China’s rise and demonstrates, particularly in terms of the original aspiration, that the CCP under Xi Jinping seeks to bring the party back to its original aspiration of ideological-revolutionary purity and, in so doing, preserve the party’s power to rule over China.

### **3. The Successor Problem and the Ageing Dictator**

The successor problem is a direct consequence of the Party-state dilemma. The lack of institutionalisation is in this instance replaced by loyalty to the leader who sets the tone but whose imperative to consolidate power constrains the lifeline of the impersonal party to that of

the living functionary in office (Ken Jowitt 1993, 8). This dictatorship of the party is postulated for a temporary period of rule, to ensure consistency as much in power as in policymaking. However, as is often the case where power prevails, the temporary nature of this rule finds itself amid that tension between consolidating the party's mandate in the long term and the contemporary leader's prerequisite to building up his own cabinet. The study of Chinese politics takes this logic further by arguing that in the post-Soviet era, meritocratic pragmatism and bureaucratic rule replaced charismatic leadership. Put simply: if studies on the post-communist phase are correct, collegiality prevails over one-man rule (Centeno 2017, 105). It is an attractive paradigm through which to study China but is, nevertheless, false. Charismatic leadership, as it is applied in the Weberian sense to surviving communist states such as Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, and China still applies (see Saxonberg, 2013).

The field of totalitarianism likens the temporary dictatorship described earlier to a “messianic phase” (Saxonberg 2013, 17) drawing directly from the success in the revolution; after which the period of reform is either freezing (reversed or stopped) or maturing (often considered in the cases of Vietnam and, importantly, China). Such an approach ought to explain the move towards performance-based legitimacy which naturally comes at the behest of ideological purity (Saxonberg, 2013, p. 272; see also Centeno, 2017, p. 103). Such a period stands described as an “early post-totalitarian stage” (Mujal-León, Eusebio; Busby 2001), transitory in the enduring grasp of charismatic leadership but also, simultaneously, in its move away from ideology as a guiding force (Mujal-León and Busby in Centeno, 2017, pp. 103–104). The reform-or-perish dilemma prescribing economic growth over ideological purity for the survival of such party states (Centeno 2017, 125) is in the case of China also described in the debate on engagement with the country (A. I. Johnston 2019) or its rise. By perceiving of those political leaders opposing reform within the party (or even the contra-reformers) as merely

temporarily halting a reform process that ought to lead to the liberal model, there is little room left for an understanding of the way in which the revolutionary legacy of the CCP may be reclaimed.

Under a leader as Xi Jinping, even if he stays on for another decade – and perhaps spurring this decision itself, this question is particularly pertinent as it is a task that “dull” bureaucrats, politically skilled but altogether not charismatic, may be less able to do. It is also a risky undertaking for the future of the party itself, for it inextricably connects Xi to the CCP, and therefore China’s fate as a socialist rising power. To imagine a wider range of alternatives within the socialist system beyond questionable victory and inevitable collapse, it is interesting to move beyond the Soviet Union’s trajectory as the historical guidebook. Indeed, the collapse of the USSR as the global representative of the communist ideology makes comparisons between Xi Jinping and Gorbachev as two opposites of one spectrum. Moving the debate from the European and Russian context (Pons, Silvio; Di Donato 2017) to the non-European one (Saxonberg 2013) allows more options.

Xi Jinping today may, then, be considered more closely resembling Cuba’s Fidel Castro during the 1990s than Mikhail Gorbachev before the fall of the Soviet Union; rendering Xi as indispensable to the Chinese Party-state survival as the *Comandante* before him. The question poses itself here as well: after Xi, if not who, then what (Mujal-León, Eusebio; Busby 2001, 11; 15)? Despite it being a relatively recent phenomenon, the Xi Jinping period in Chinese politics is helpful for the perspective it brings on China’s rise. Reaching an understanding of Xi’s transformational effect on contemporary China makes a study of the course of the CCP under Xi so interesting.

## **Positioning Xi Jinping's Leadership within China's rise**

Political leaders are always the most visible representations of a political system. This truism may even be more the case in Party-states such as China, where a vast yet elusive apparatus of power sits behind the person nominally in charge. Because of their lack of an actual democratic process, it is also true that leadership succession is always a troubling time. So much so, in fact, that it can be argued that the charismatic leader of autocratic regimes (Linz, Juan J.; Stepan 1996) may take the Party-state's ideological legitimacy with him to the grave. One solution to this predicament is for such regimes to become patrimonial or hereditary (as is the case in North Korea or for Cuba under Raúl Castro, see Centeno, 2017, p. 122). To the success of China, it was long assumed that the institutionalisation of the regime's model of leadership succession would prevent future chaos in the transfer of power through the collective leadership (Fewsmith 2021). In the case of Xi Jinping, however, his reluctance – or inability – to step down from power, combined with the failure to groom a successor, puts this assumption right on its head. However, focusing on the charismatic leader, as the embodiment of the party which he represents may lead us away from the political organisation that rules autocratically. At the same time, paying attention to the party might lead us to believe that the institutionalising process of that organisation secures its continuing existence.

Yet another question may lead us to reject ideological explanations completely in favour of elite struggle within the party (see earlier); an assumption that is so misleading that it blurs our understanding of the enduring nature of Party-states. Political rule here becomes hereditary to ensure a smooth and peaceful of power, thereby avoiding collapse (Saxonberg 2013, 107–52). However, it is not necessarily dynastic but happens within the ruling apparatus, which emerges as the new elite and which may adapt the existing ideology to allow a wider range of “economic action [admissible] to the ideas of socialism” (Centeno 2017, 106). To understand



the problem of leadership transition in China, however, neither the earlier transitions of Jiang Zemin nor that of Hu Jintao are helpful because these leaders were handpicked by Deng Xiaoping himself and presented challenges all of their own (Lampton 2014, xi; Fewsmith 2021, 98–100). The selection of Xi Jinping as the successor to Hu, as well, is problematic for the alternatives that were present in the figures of Li Keqiang and Bo Xilai (Gilley, Bruce; Nathan 2003, 57). As demonstrated below, because of the ending of the revolutionary-ideological nature of the CCP, the next Chinese leader may be more bureaucratic and could be drawn, for example, from the Communist Youth League of China [中国共产主义青年团] (Tsimonis 2021; Fewsmith 2021, 153). The detriment of the CCP is thus not its immediate collapse but the takeover of a technocratic elite that may, for the first time in its history, pit itself against the revolutionaries and their offspring, in a transformation of Chinese elite politics since the 1990s (Lin 2020, Cheng Li 1990).

The successor problem is particularly noted under Xi Jinping's term. Of particular concern is the abolishment of term limits on the Chairman of the PRC [中华人民共和国主席] in 2018, a post that ranks behind that of Secretary-General of the CCP [中共中央总书记] and Chairman of the Central Military Commission [中央军事委员会主席] but which, for reasons of diplomacy and other affairs related to international standing, may very well be considered as an important title and is therefore often translated as President (Baranovitch 2021, 5). It is the case, however, that the other two titles of that troika of political leadership (all of which are indeed held by Xi Jinping) do not hold a similar limitation on terms and would, thus, already ensure a continued hold to power for Xi, should it be considered necessary. Jiang Zemin, for example, remained Chairman of the CMC well into the period under Hu Jintao, his successor (Fewsmith 2021, 98–100). Perhaps one of the informal norms long assumed to be sacrosanct at

least since the end of the Deng Xiaoping period was the anointing of a political successor to secure the peaceful transfer of power.

However, as Torigian (2017) and Fewsmith (2021) demonstrate, the informality of these supposed norms ought not to be confused with an actual institutionalisation of such a process. Analyses of Xi Jinping and the natural focus on the individual leader, thus, does not replace explanations for the bureaucratic banality of the Party-state. It is nonetheless interesting to contrast increasing one-man rule with the emergence of an “oligarchical pattern of power” (Rigby 1998, 60) that manifested itself in China from 1978 to 2012. Much like Stalinism, the personalistic ideology best described as *Xiism* (Mulvad 2019) as policy, method, and a form of personal rule that will disappear with its founder (Rigby 1998, 53). Under Xi Jinping, then, it remains to be seen whether he will remain firmly in power for a third term (for a discussion, see Li, 2021; and Clarke, Donald; Li, 2021) and/or who will emerge as the successor.

It is assumed, again as a product of the requirement for each new leader to build his own administration with loyalists, that the first term (2012-2017) and particularly the first three years, under Xi merely served to consolidate power and set up his administration for what was to come (C. Li 2016, n/a). This centralisation of power led to a smoother carrying out of policies during the second term (2017-2022). A third term, which would see Xi in power until 2027 would then potentially see the emergence of a new kind of China, where a vision of a society of common prosperity, part democratic, part egalitarian may be further strengthened. Xi may simply not be able to retire, particularly since the wide-ranging campaign against government corruption may have harnessed a lot of silent opposition to his rule (K. Brown 2018d).

Whatever the case may be, Xi’s centralisation of power will reveal, at least over the short term, an image of a strong and consolidated China; however, the future implications are more obscure, with no real indication of what comes next (Kenderdine 2021). It presents the

successor problem in a positive sense, that is from the viewpoint of the individual leader at the time of his rule, rather than for the survival of the party. Ci Jiwei, much in the spirit of Andrei Amalrik's (1970) prediction of the Soviet Union's downfall around 1984, specifically identifies the year 2029 as the end of the party's revolutionary-ideological acumen; indeed, a period after which there will be no longer any political leader that can trace a direct line between himself, as one of the Princelings and their fathers, who served as *alte Kämpfer* in the Chinese revolution. Such an explanation on the lifespan of the Party-state as directly linked to the transcendental revolution and embodied by the old revolutionaries and their sons (as Princelings) is interesting, as it again brings the debate back to the lack of institutionalisation of the Party-state. Since 2029 falls right in the middle between the two centennial goals as defined by the CCP (see earlier), Ci's temporal delineation of the upper limit of the Chinese Party-state's lifespan, at least in revolutionary-ideological terms, can be considered as such. Captured within the strong leader, the Party-state dilemma and its associated successor problem may be postponed in terms of the actual transition of leadership (either in the positive or the negative) as well as the designating of a successor to the throne (in the case of the former).

In analyses of Chinese elite politics, there is a certain determinism visible that presents leadership transitions in the post-Mao period as if the succession was clear all along. The CCP under Xi, as demonstrated earlier, distinguishes between standing up under Mao Zedong, getting rich under Deng Xiaoping, and, finally, becoming strong under Xi himself. Western scholarship perceives these illustrious figures as transformational personas in Chinese politics, while considering Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao as "merely" transitional. Contrariwise, this linear narrative (largely self-congratulatory by the CCP) is not very helpful for a critical assessment of China's rise. Such outward expressions of order and stability in the apex political body shroud a long process of deliberation, campaigning, and struggle that is not always evident, let

alone orderly and peaceful. While a certain degree of informal institutionalisation of such a process may be considered true, challenges of naked power itself are inherently a part of the political story. At the same time, Xi Jinping cannot be considered as being on a personal mission to undo Deng's legacy. Instead, the current Chairman is actively building on these foundations while also seeking to circumvent the dilemma that was already present but further exacerbated by the economic boom following the reform period. The avoidance – and perhaps solving – of this Party-state dilemma is here a primary concern.

The less-than-optimal institutionalisation of Party-state relations, however, makes the successor dilemma a direct consequence of this dilemma. The centralisation of power by a sitting Chairman thus does not necessarily serve a personal ambition but, first and foremost, acts as a panacea for the question of leadership transition, arguably the most vulnerable time for a Party-state such as the PRC. It is a process that may best be described as the ossification of the political party's ideological-revolutionary nature, risking its eventual obsolescence in favour of a (neo)liberalised state. When considered as an additional explanation for the collapse of the Soviet Union, next to the other variables already explained in Chapter 2 (see also Dresen, n.d.; Lewin, 1996), it becomes clear why there is such a preoccupation within the CCP with avoiding a Soviet-style collapse. The campaign to return to the original aspiration and its associated historical mission, then, is very similar to the sort of humanistic socialism embedded within Gorbachev's reform communism. This risky move, which had the intention to preserve rather than forsake the party's ruling position in the Soviet Union at the time held within it "a fundamental alteration of [the] new identity and, consequently, [delegitimised] the very sources of the communist experience [rendering] the idea of recovering the purity of Leninism [...] no longer plausible (Pons, Silvio; Di Donato 2017, 199).

## **Self-perpetuation as a Basic Problem for China's Rise**

While leadership-centric explanations are to be avoided, they are of interest in terms of measuring a regime's ideological legitimacy, at least through the temporal viewpoint these pronouncements present. This form of legitimacy, upon which these leaders built their policies and from which they draw to justify their rule, is often posited against performative legitimacy; or the measure of the extent of the state's responsiveness to emerging challenges in the contemporary society over which they govern (Korolev 2017; Truex 2016). Because of the overarching temporal framework of this thesis, this chapter is less concerned with this latter form of legitimacy but focuses on the ideological arm of this two-pronged perspective on legitimacy.

It is, of course, argued that such states now find themselves in a post-ideological and, thus, post-totalitarian period; and, therefore, will soon join the democratic nation of the world. In brief, it is assumed that transition to the liberal model is inevitable. Little wonder, then, that such conclusions are applied to each new autocratic leader that comes into power in such regimes (Jiang, 2016; Kristof, 2018; see also Wylie, Lana; Glidden, 2013). Xi Jinping, as well as others within the Politburo Standing Committee, were long thought to be disguised reformers within the party. The disillusionment was ever greater when no such reforms took place. The shift from the collective leadership in Chinese elite politics, an informal norm of the post-Deng Xiaoping period (Torigian 2017), can here be said to be largely replaced with the personalistic dictatorship of Xi Jinping. However, it could also be said that this charismatic leadership is necessary to bridge the gap at a time where ideological legitimacy is faltering and where a clear successor is not (yet) designated.

Dictatorship implies totalitarian rule. Studies on democratic transitions of communist states (Saxonberg 2013; Linz; Stepan 1996) by definition perceive linear progress from

totalitarianism to post-totalitarianism and, therefore, liberalisation and its associated democratisation along liberal lines. To interpret Leninist systems as a unit of analysis, a distinction can be made between the changes that regime undergoes in its relation to state and society; and the related degree of totalitarian rule that the party employs to those two dimensions of public life. Traditionally, Leninist regimes can be set against authoritarian ones, such as Nazi Germany (Ken Jowitt 1993, 5). In both cases, however, a dynamic understanding of the ever more all-pervasive rule of totalitarianism can be instructive. Such an approach stands in stark contrast to the notion that totalitarianism is a “static concept” (Fewsmith 2021, 5). Building on previous research, it is possible to open this concept and perceive the degrees that may manifest in a Party-state’s domination of society as follows:

<b>Authoritarian &gt; pre-Totalitarianism &gt; Totalitarianism &gt; post-Totalitarianism</b>
--

Totalitarianism can be considered as an outgrowth of the authoritarian continuum (Feldman 2021; Arendt 2017) to which the Party-state evolves in which “to perpetuate itself, attempts to impose itself and, in order to impose itself, resorts to force” (Tannery 1991, 75). It is, of course, possible to question the extent to which totalitarian control is all-pervasive with reference to the limits of the Party-state’s abilities to enforce such rule (Chung, 2016; see also Chen, Huirong; Greitens, 2021).

The usefulness of the totalitarian concept may indeed be more useful by considering its temporal extremities leading up to and following such a period. As demonstrated above, this chapter is concerned with the totalitarian tendency of Party-states when faced with the task of self-renewal amid faltering ideological legitimacy and the lack of a clear successor. Such a mismatch between the question of the succession of political leadership and that of legitimacy may be considered as a perfect storm for the Party-state, particularly in China. Indeed, far more

than a chronic crisis of ideology, the Party-state dilemma is here a chronological one. Permitted change, at least from the standpoint of the CCP, can thus only come from within the leadership itself. Given the lack of institutionalisation, however, a collegial arrangement in the Chinese Party-state is all the more difficult because of the lack of collective leadership (Baranovitch 2021, 1; 4), and particularly the lack of such a named successor; as evidenced by the “messy [...] post-Mao successions” (Centeno 2017, 122). Moreover, this situation puts the CCP under Xi Jinping into a charismatic and early totalitarian Party-state, as opposed to a maturing post-totalitarian one (Saxonberg in Centeno, 2017, 102–106; 119–124). This characteristic is fundamental to the understanding of China’s rise and the CCP position in this process.

In a Jowittian interpretation of revolutionary movements, the early “messianic phase” of the revolution (Saxonberg in Centeno, 2017, 103) is replaced by institutionalisation as soon as the revolutionaries set up their own government and are henceforth confronted with the bureaucratic task of ruling the nation (see earlier). Transformation, to Jowitt (1975), indeed suggests an organisational change that goes with the reconfiguration (and, therefore, institutionalisation) of the Party-state. Applied to China, the CCP’s change from a revolutionary [革命党] to a governing party [执政党] in 2004 is said to be evidence for this development (Heath, 2014; see also Womack, 2005). Such an understanding of the CCP, however, stands firmly opposed to its Leninist tendencies, confirming single-party rule, to override the state bureaucracy (see earlier). For this reason, it is mistaken to conceive of the CCP’s transformation from a revolutionary to a ruling party [从革命党向执政党转变] (Li Xu 2019).

Such an interpretation of the party’s transformation goes beyond the continuing role that the CCP preserves for itself to fulfil its ambitions for China’s rise. The better interpretation is, thus, according to the official version: “Our party transformed from a party that led the people in the struggle to seize power in the country to a country that has been in power for a long time

[我们党已经从一个领导人民为夺取全国政权而奋斗的党转变成成为在全国执政并长期执政的党] (Xu et al. 2019). It is a statement that interestingly underscores the longevity of the CCP, so cherished by its leaders.

It can be argued that Xi's China, unlike Cuba after Fidel Castro, for example, is not in a maturing stage (Centeno 2017, 102). Indeed, the problematic here can be illustrated by the Cuban case where, after several decades of the Castro dynasty (Fidel from year to year; Raul from year to year), the Party-state is now ruled by Miguel Díaz-Canel who cannot claim these revolutionary credentials and can be treated much more as the dull bureaucrat. As illustrated before, the loss of such mythical status is dangerous, as it necessarily brings the party closer to the government and, again, risks an erosion, to perhaps even the obsolescence, of the former's ideological-revolutionary nature. Such an event is not necessarily negative for the world, but it is of existential concern for the party that it is prevented from happening. The lack of institutionalisation, however, may be what leads to this basic, acute sense of weakness: the greater personalistic approach to governance than is the case in Vietnam (Abrami, Regina M.; Malesky, Edmund J.; Zheng 2021), for example, reveals an institutional foundation for this predicament. To imagine what comes after Xi, indeed, what follows in the trajectory of China's rise, it is worthwhile to consider whether a "charismatic, post-totalitarian incarnation" is possible and what it would look like (see, for example, Mujal-León, Eusebio; Busby, 2001, p. 11).

The *Sinophrenic* interpretation of China's rise as described above can here also be described as a reform-or-perish dilemma (Centeno 2017, 105–6) favouring economic performance over ideological purity. It is here not the time or place for a discussion about the implications of this concept, but as will be discussed in the conclusion to this thesis, it may be interesting to start thinking about economic growth in the case of China's rise not for its own



sake, but in terms of how it serves the remaking of Chinese society in the guise of the CCP. The subsequent decline in ideological legitimacy and the increase in performative legitimacy (capitalist policies under the guise of pragmatism) furthermore, presumable, sets these regimes up for either of two choices: either the reform process continues (maturing) or it is stopped. The linearity of these assumptions naturally errs on the side of the former and is evidently based on a normative reading of communist regimes and their socialist one-party states, often associated with the *End of History* (Fukuyama 2006). It is, therefore, very ironic that the rejuvenation of the nation is to be pushed through by an ageing dictator with no clear successor in sight. Durability, nor longevity can thus be an indicator of the strength of China's rise, let alone evidence for any ability on the part of China to think and strategise over the long term.

By understanding ideology not from its elusive definition as an ethereal force but as an essential process of reproduction produced in government, media, and society, however, may put forward a way out. While routine events of party and state, as well as the celebrations of yet another decade of their existence, are landmark events that signal the continuing, reinvigorated rule over China, securing the political leadership across different generations is another more crucial aspect related to perpetuating the Party-state towards 2049 and after. A staffing issue itself, the selection of the next generation of political leadership and, in particular, the successor of political leader himself. It is a crucial issue, indeed related to the nomenklatura first and foremost but where the same problems of the Party-state institutionalisation express themselves most prominently; in terms of loyalty to the "old" leader and the building of new loyalties for the constructing of the new administration. The problem of geriatric dictatorship, with the revolutionary leaders passing on the baton to a younger generation that is considered more meritocratic (and therefore giving rise to a more non-ideological bureaucracy) contradicts not only the origins of the party's coming into power, it also negates its entire reason of being.

The successor's problem demonstrates why ideological legitimacy cannot be traded in for performative legitimacy.

## **4. Conclusion**

This chapter expands on the nature and pathologies of Chinese politics as it is navigating China's rise. Relevant for the question here is indeed the long-term vision of the CCP upon its place in Chinese history, its society, as well as the future it aims to bring about. Following the assumption of China's post-socialist nature, it is now often argued that the CCP traded in ideological legitimacy for that of (economic) performance. This notion is based on a particular reading of China after 1978 and its four decades of economic growth. However, the same economic forces behind the economic miracle are now exposing grave socio-economic problems among which there are, among others, the urban-rural divide, the disparities between rich and poor, migratory labour, and its related hukou problem. Concurrent with the social disparities, there emerged a new image of the CCP as China's new aristocratic elite. In the Chinese Party-state, the political leader is the embodiment of the party. This organisation is, in turn, is an embodiment of popular sovereignty and forms the democratic people's dictatorship.

The leader, as such, represents the Party-state dilemma, particularly where there is a lack of an institutionalised process of leadership transition. Where on a functionally existing basis, the Party-state's right to rule is renewed either through the yearly convening of the parliamentary and advisory bodies of the Chinese government; or the five-yearly meeting of the National Party Congress, the continued existence of the government can very well be tied directly to the lifespan of the ageing dictator. However, where there is a lack of a clear successor embodying revolutionary zeal, it becomes all the more difficult for the leadership to carry out ideological legitimacy. Jiang Shigong notes that the party is a "principle-driven political party that believes in Marxism. It is a collective vanguard whose historical mandate, revealed by

Marxism, is pursued with commitment and a spirit of sacrifice. It is a highly secular, rational and organized organ of political action” (Jiang 2018; Ownby, David; Cheek 2020). Such an interpretation of the political process behind China’s rise leads to a more dynamic interpretation of this phenomenon of rising power in the world. Leaving it, contrary to the more traditional debate on China’s rise, open to change rather than to the definite success and inevitable battle.

Interpreting China’s rise with a countdown to 2029 or, in any event, around that time makes for an interpretation of the revolutionary-ideological nature of CCP that is finite and the implications this predicament for the future of China’s rise to power. Importantly, there is the question of leadership renewal in a time after which the revolutionary pedigree is running short. Indeed, it is easier to identify the actual leaders of China and their direct offspring as possessing red genes – that is: holding direct memory of their own or their family’s role in the Chinese revolution. The problem of democratic representativeness is similarly true. In this regard, charismatic leadership can put forward a remedy, however temporary, for this problem. Beyond the leader, however, sits a supposed impersonal party that ought to be perpetuated and whose nomenklatura positions filled with the best possible members. Whether those individuals are technically skilled or politically reliable is here a debate for another time.

Contrary to the predictions of either an imminent success or a coming collapse of China’s political system and as such its rise to power, obsolescence of the party (Steinfeld 2010) can be considered as the actual risk for the Party-state. It is here that the debate on the CCP’s age or power (its longevity or durability) is illustrated by the CCP’s hundredth-year anniversary and the PRC at 70. For political parties, thus organised for engaging in politics according to their ideological inclination, it is not a question of more or less power, but about staying in power. The risk, as demonstrated by the fall of the CPSU and therefore the USSR, however, lies in the precedence that is given to solving more immediate problems, challenges of which

acute attention is necessary but which may not detract from the more chronic crisis that is brewing in such states. In this regard, the revolution emerges as an unfulfilled task. While the living standards are improved as part of it, the grand future is an aspiration that is still strived towards. Clearly, ideology is as important as the performative legitimacy that supports it. That ideological nature of the party is relatively unchanging. That is to say that the Party-state in the face of domestic challenges, popular discontent, or international developments seeks to renew its ideological mandate rather than transition away from it.

It can be argued that the downfall of the Soviet Union represented the decline of socialist-communist theories of the world and held within it the assumption of its eventual obsolescence. As an ideology of the Party-state, however, it endured. Similarly, and building on this assumption of ideologically void Party-states, the outcome-driven debate on China's rise as it is here described also focuses on the nation-state without paying much attention to the political party that guides the rising socialist power. The current emphasis given to the institutional transformation that ought to be undertaken by the CCP, should it wish to remain relevant and in power, betrays a growing belief in the role of legitimacy in China as being of performative, rather than ideological importance (see, for example, Sun, Feng; Zhang, 2020). In turn, the responsiveness of the CCP is here put forward as an explanation for the resilience of its authoritarian state, increasingly ignoring the fundamental relevance of ideology as an explanatory variable and emphasising pragmatism. In so doing, the fraught conclusion of post-communism, associated with the fall of the Soviet Union and communism in Europe and Russia more generally, is here repeated.

For the CCP, as it urgently grasps, it is not only important to update its institutional process in favour of the party, but also to reproduce its ideological framework through which everything happens. Importantly, ideology and organisation are, particularly in a Party-state

such as China's, by definition, inextricably connected. It is a defining characteristic of that system as explored by Franz Schurmann (1966) and recently again, in a tribute to that earlier work by Rogier Creemers and Susan Trevaskes (2021). Frameworks to study China's rise thus not only need to bring the party back into the analysis but also its ideology. The party organisation, as well as the temporality envisioned in its ideology crucially informs the direction, and therefore our understanding, of such a rising power's trajectory. The reproduction of ideology as a political and social practice can then more consistently be considered when judging the ascendancy (or fall) of a socialist rising power. It is not so much ideological obsolescence that is here to primary risk, but the inability of the party to reproduce this ideology through its organisational(-institutional) nature: indeed, the party as embodiment of the revolution. That the problem of ideology and its reproduction (and, therefore, that of the party) is not so easily solved is demonstrated by the precedence being given to solving more immediate challenges within society; challenges to which acute attention is of existential importance but are itself only a product of the CCP's non-integrated nature within Chinese society (Fewsmith 2021, 110).

The campaign behind the slogan [不忘初心，牢记使命] is the active pursuit of ideological-revolutionary renewal as well as the explicit rejection by the CCP to give up on its ideological and institutional reason of being. It can be understood as the political work that is representative of the ongoing concerns surrounding the endurance relevance of the ideological doctrine and how it is best delivered upon by the party according to its basic principles. As discussed in the previous chapter, the sentiment fits in an ongoing process of reconsidering why Marxism (or socialism more generally) not only works but also how the CCP, by consequence, is able to bring about the best possible future for China's rise. Such ideological determinism, at least openly, here inhibits any form of critical thinking as the leadership ought to be seen as

both adhering to the ideology, as well as consistently implementing it, should they wish to remain relevant as rulers over the geographical space that is China. In speeches for the CCP's hundredth anniversary, as well as a later clarification, Xi Jinping noted: "The reason why the CCP is able and why socialism with Chinese characteristics is good, is because Marxism, at the fundamental level, works (Xi 2021b)." Later, the Chinese President added: "The reason Marxism works is because the CCP continuously [adapts] Marxism [to the Chinese and contemporary context] and implements it as guiding practice contemporary" (Xi 2022a). It is, of course, hard to argue with such a circular reasoning since the former informs the latter. It does not, however, make it correct.

Nevertheless, it is not so much revolutionary-ideological obsolescence but the failure of the Party-state to reproduce itself its organisational-institutional channels that lead to the weakening of such parties and, thus, the state. Clearly, the Chinese Party-state is not beyond ideology and it is unclear whether it ever really can be. The political forces that are unleashed (repression or relaxation) and which may cause a shift in the political character, are then tied not just to particular periods of crisis but to the political context in which these crisis moments take place. For the CCP, ideological security remains national security (Blanchette 2020). By recognising these changing societal needs and, thus, positioning itself into Chinese society in such a way that it can draw legitimacy from it directly, the CCP also exposed itself much more to the potential failings of its performative legitimacy. Ideologically speaking, however, the goal remains the transformation of that society in the image of itself by 2049. In considering the questions raised in this chapter, China's rise is not one of economic growth but of faith in the ideological goal as well as the revolutionary-ideological renewal thereof.

In the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese people, as China's rise can be more aptly understood in the eyes of the CCP, the CCP portrays itself as the populist representative of the

people as the whole nation. In so becoming a substitute for the will of an abstracted people that is to be served, the party not only draws its legitimacy but also justifies its power to rule for all those people. The CCP is, after all, there “to serve the people.” A perpetual rule for that political organisation is, then, also desirable, as it means the indefinite existence of the Chinese nation. It is an interesting process whereby politics itself becomes politicised. Despite the rhetoric, however, nothing can last forever, especially socialist Party-states that exhibit pathologies of their own kind (Yurchak 2006). Important questions that remain, firstly, ask whether the CCP’s is a chronic or a chronological crisis? Secondly, further study is required into the revolutionary people and their patience with the CCP; and particularly, what happens if the party’s prophecy fails (Ci 2019, 111).

# Chapter 4:

## China's Rise and Phases within the Belt and Road Initiative

IS CHINA EXPORTING its model of development via the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? As perhaps the most visible manifestation of China's rise, the BRI figures as the vehicle of this rise to power; indeed, as the guiding principle of China's proposed model of development (Hoering 2018). This chapter explores how 'mundane' products, such as roads and bridges created under the auspices of the continent-spanning initiative, are China's main focus of export, rather than the lofty ideal of its (socialist) ideology. It is the construction of infrastructure that makes up the real source of China's soft power, particularly in its initial phase (Barker 2017; Lim; Mukherjee 2017, 2; 4; Morgan 2018). This mundane export is a natural consequence of China's rise and is based on the belief that it is, first and foremost, the material conditions that guide the development of states, as indicated by the Marxist outlook on history and China's economic development itself. It also points to the main fault lines of the Chinese economic miracle. Whether to explain the uneven economic development within China (K. F. Lim 2014), the expanse of Chinese state power (Joniak-Lüthi 2015), and its (extra)territorial manifestations (Furstenberg et al. 2021), the spatiality of or, indeed, the Chinese state's effects on territorial space, is an interesting concept to explore.



Marxist explanations for this development refer to the spatial, temporal (and, by consequence, the spatio-temporal) fix to the crisis of accumulation within capitalism. This process refers to the “internal transformation of capitalism within a given territorial space or economic region marked by a certain structural coherence [and] its transformation through the export of surplus capital or labour beyond the boundaries of the space or region in which it was generated” (Jessop 2006, 147). These surpluses, whether of labour (and its associated unemployment) or of capital (leading to commodity glut, idle productive capacity, and surplus money that is not being invested) can, thus, only be resolved through “temporal displacement through investment in long-term capital projects or social expenditure [and/or] spatial displacements through opening up new markets, new production capacities and new resources, social and labour possibilities elsewhere” (Harvey 2004, 64). Fixing the excesses of capitalism, then, becomes an imperial undertaking based on the “territorial logics of power” which brings with it “a durable fixation of capital in place in physical form” but is nevertheless, “an improvised, temporary solution, based on spatial reorganization” (Jessop 2006, 142-147).

What form may Chinese imperialism then take? Following David Shambaugh’s description of China as a “partial power” characterised by a “pattern of breadth but not depth, presence but not influence” (2013, 9), this chapter argues that the Chinese desire for international presence is guided by national considerations rather than the endeavour to grow into a global player, let alone the new hegemon. While ideology is, thus, not exported directly, it is nevertheless decisive for the state’s motivations and actions at home and, thus, abroad because of these internal pressures for exporting surplus, resource extraction, and market-seeking purposes (M. Clarke 2020). The main contribution of this chapter sits with its exploration of China’s engagement with the world, via the BRI, from a decidedly domestic point of view. It deals directly with the tension between the prerogative of defending the

country's national borders and the promotion for its businesses to move outside of those borders (Narins, Thomas P.; Agnew 2019, 3). In so seeking to secure its continued rise to power, China is connecting its own development to that of other countries. It is a development which, for better or worse, may dictate the future of China's rise. It is furthermore important to note, as does William C. Kirby, that China is an international, rather than a global actor for the simple reason of *inter-national* (Kirby 2006, 873; emphasis in original).

The aim of this chapter is to challenge the empirical confusion surrounding the BRI and China's investment presence abroad from the perspective of China's domestic drive for socialist modernisation. This chapter builds on earlier studies that explore how and where China's rise and through it, the BRI, is evolving (Mohan 2021; Hu et al. 2020) and where it is faced with difficulties (Hameiri; Jones; Zou 2018; Ghiselli; Morgan 2021). These analyses, however, often consider the spatial parameter of "where" China is moving to but not the temporal "when." A spatiotemporal approach, combining both of these elements, makes for a more informed interpretation of a rising power's trajectory. To problematise the temporal trajectory captured within China's rise, this chapter differentiates between three phases of the BRI that can, at present, be distinguished. The chapter commences with a brief reflection on the BRI as a work in progress and links the initiative to what the Chinese leadership calls the creation of a 'Community of Common Destiny.' Before proceeding, it ought to be noted that this chapter deals predominantly with the BRI's continental manifestations, with passing reference paid to the Maritime Silk Road (Griffiths 2020).

## **1. Distinguishing Phases within the BRI**

As widely varied the dimensions of China's rise may be, the Belt and Road Initiative is perhaps its most famous manifestation (Ferdinand 2016; Escobar 2017). This chapter is not concerned with providing evidence for the particular Marxist dialectics that are driving China's rise and,

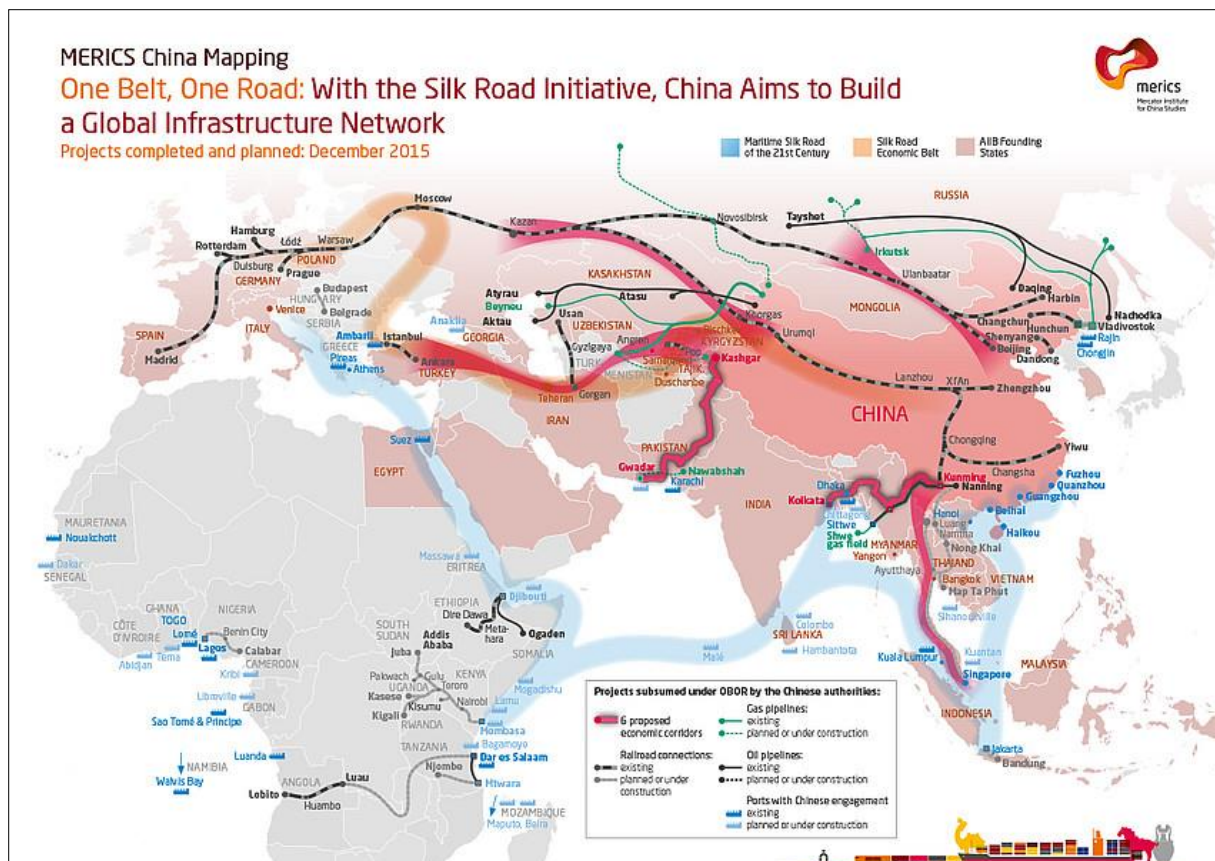
thus, its BRI, since it is clear that the Party-state is convinced of the historical determinism behind these developments. Instead, the compelling factor here is to identify several phases within this globe-spanning project, whether guided by those dialectics or not, and to see whether the theory driving them holds up. In other words, building on the content of this thesis: does a general perception of the temporality behind China's rise run concurrent to this initiative; and, thus, what can be expected in the development of the BRI when it is perceived as a vehicle for China's rise?

### Phase 0: Go West, Go Out as Precursor to the BRI

Launched concurrently with Xi's political elevation in 2012-2013, the BRI consists of the continental Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road. A fair degree of fiction and fact surrounding the initiative can be attributed to the official vagueness surrounding the BRI's objectives, which is in equal measure the strength of its marketing campaign. It is against this backdrop that strategic competition with China develops. While the initiative can thus be perceived as Xi Jinping's personal attempt to enlist China's infrastructural-industrial complex into the party's quest to reshape the international order (Zhao 2020), it necessarily builds upon previous projects undertaken to confront the same problem associated with China's history of economic growth. Indeed, it is interesting to perceive of China's economic growth as developing along "different points on shared timeline" (Ang 2016, 34) moving from East to West and, eventually, moving beyond the national borders. As a vehicle for the country's further rise, then, the BRI acts as an umbrella bringing together many old and new projects. As such, this globe-spanning initiative is nothing but the next iteration of the earlier 'Go Out Strategy' [走出去战略] from 1999 and the 'China Western Development' [西部大开发] launched a year later (Ferdinand 2016; Min 2020, 53-83).

## Phase 1: Infrastructure Development, Exporting Excess Capacity

The Vision and Action Plan, the BRI's original blueprint released in 2015, put forward five priorities for cooperation under the initiative: policy coordination [政策沟通]; facilities connectivity [设施联通]; unimpeded trade [贸易畅通]; financial integration [资金融通]; and people-to-people bonds [民心相通]. These areas of priority, together with the proposed economic corridors would give shaped to the initial unfolding of the BRI (MOFCOM 2015). Image 7 below gives a rendering of the BRI through an unofficial map produced by the Mercator Institute for China Studies. While previous commentators have noted the fallacy of using such maps of the BRI as “curiously show[ing] more of the distant past than the near future” (Iwanek 2018); not useful because of the “still evolving BRI cohort of projects” (Narins, Thomas P.; Agnew 2019, 22); and enforcing a contradiction between strong national borders and a seemingly unbounded empire under the BRI (Grant 2018). Concerning this last point, there is indeed a contradiction between “protecting ‘strong borders’ yet also promoting a policy of ‘going out’,” as Narins and Agnew observe (2019, 3).



**Image 7.** “One Belt, One Road: With the Silk Road Initiative, China Aims to Build a Global Infrastructure Network” (Mokry 2016)

This contradiction does not only touch upon the issue of central oversight over Chinese companies going abroad (Zeng; Jones 2019; Jones; Zou 2017) but also, and more existentially, on matters of national defence and security which are visible in the tough choice between defending China’s hinterland in the South China Sea or going out via the Belt and Road (Nie 2016). This chapter contends that these maps, while incomplete, can be revealing in their visualisation of the cross-border connectivity links that are being established between Chinese provinces and China’s neighbouring countries (Narins; Agnew 2019, 10). Indeed, while inconclusive, there is a sort of “creeping effect” visible that allows for an understanding of where the BRI is going economically. This perspective, in turn, makes it easier to make judgments on where China’s international presence is evolving to, both politically and militarily. Important in the map above are the economic corridors, traced in red. These corridors include:

the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor; the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor; the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. One geostrategic trend that is visualised here is China's turn towards Eurasia and the Indian Ocean and away from the Strait of Malacca, one of the many strategic chokepoints that straddle China's immediate seascape (Lanteigne 2008; Myers 2021).

The Belt and Road is part of one of the “most important structural mega trends unfolding in China,” according to Chi Lo. Through the initiative, the country is “paring [its] excess capacity through supply-side reform” which allows the Chinese to, at least in the medium term, “lessen [the] structural drag on domestic demand growth and improve investment returns” (2017, 73). Here, Lo essentially describes the origins of the BRI as being of a domestic nature, and especially its connection to the transformation of China's economic growth model. Other structural barriers include shifting demographics (Brooks 2019; L. A. Johnston 2018). In its engagements with developing nations, particularly as they happen via the BRI, China often proposes win-win cooperation [合作共赢] as a basis for negotiation. The influx of Chinese industrial overcapacity and excess labour as investments in fixed assets abroad in recipient countries is here converted in the import of natural resources and the opening of market opportunities (Kenderdine 2018; Kenderdine, Tristan; Ling 2018).

A cynical interpretation of this notion of ‘infrastructure-for-resources deals’ (Alves 2013) might lead one to argue that this proposed win-win results amounts to nothing more than a double gain for China. Supported by earlier studies that focus on resource extraction by China, rather than the spread of ideology, this argument suggests that the asymmetric relations commonly associated with colonialism are once again present in China's interactions with the developing world (Morgan 2018; Marysse, Stefaan; Geenen 2009; Brautigam 2015). From this perspective emerges, naturally, warnings over China's “predatory lending” (M. Green 2019)

and, infamously, “debt trap diplomacy” (Chellaney 2017). The debt-for-equity swap in Sri Lanka is a case in point where the Chinese side effectively took over the port of Hambantota for 99 years (Carrai 2019; see also Brautigam 2019).

Yet it can similarly be argued that China’s alternative model of growth presents a challenge to the development paradigm of the West. In such a contest to normative modernity as laid out by the liberal democratic model lies the real competition between China and the West; or between, what is called the China Model (Zhao 2010; Guan; Ji 2015) and the Washington Consensus (Huang 2010; C. Gore 2000). This situation in which “each of us is strong enough to create conditions around the world” is the key problem of our time (Kissinger in Roy 2018). Where does the conflict, however, take place? One of the main sources of tension is between the two aforementioned models of development. In the Chinese case, this alternative model finds expression in, for example, standard setting under the BRI as envisioned by Chinese tribunal courts along those trade routes (Hillman; Goodman 2018; Polk 2018) but also in the specific foreign aid model which “combines aid with commercially oriented trade and investment ventures” (Rudyak 2019).

Chinese aid, because of the mutually beneficial approach taken by China (as a development country) therefore combines foreign policy with (domestic) economic policy. By consequence, foreign aid is here also employed for China’s own development and investment in other countries (Rudyak 2019; Mardell 2018). In the context of the BRI, it is explained that “the new Silk Road integrates China’s own development with Asian regionalism through policy coordination, road connection, trade facilitation, [and] currency exchange” (Liu Jianchao in M. Ye 2015; Narins; Agnew 2019, 10). It is here useful to distinguish between the domestic China Model [中国模式] and the internationally oriented China Solution [中国方案] (Xi 2017). Conceptually, the underlying relationship between the two is clear: China proposes its own

model of development as a solution for the ails of other countries' development, with particular caveats in place. As such, the China Solution becomes a normative filter for other developing countries to employ (Breslin 2019).

## Phase 2: Market-Seeking Abroad

After the BRI's first five years, international commentators increasingly called for the initiative to be made more transparent and accountable (Dijsselbloem 2018; Crabtree 2019). At the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation [第二届“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛], Xi Jinping agreed with these criticisms, when he observed that the BRI in its turn to high-quality development, was to pursue more “sustainable, risk-resistant, affordable and inclusive infrastructure, conducive to give full play to available resources and integrate into global supply, industrial and value chains, thereby realising integrated development” (Xi 2019a). Since this chapter conceives of the BRI as the vehicle for China's rise, the temporal perspective that is apparent within this rising trajectory can also be applied to this essential element in the country's foreign policy. Rather than predetermined, China's rise can best be perceived as an ongoing development that moves along several phases. China's brand of historical materialism manifests itself concretely in the development and order model promoted by the Chinese state both at home and abroad. One theoretical analysis of historical materialism notes that the next qualitative phase in a country's rise follows upon a period of quantitative expansion (Bukharin 1925).

In August 2018, the headlines of the Chinese newspaper *People's Daily* featured a special report looking back on the first five years of win-win cooperation under the BRI (Q. Wu 2018). In light of this article, an important question that one can ask here is whether the BRI's main focus will change over the long-term, on par with the high-quality transformation



of China's economy, and thus, its rise. Whereas in the short- to medium-term the initiative's focus lies with the curtailment of China's industrial overcapacity and energy diversification, one can ponder what form the initiative will take up in the long term. In his study, Bruno Mações notes that the BRI clearly denotes more than just roads, as it is also about the creation of "industrial clusters and free trade zones spanning construction, logistics, energy, manufacturing, agriculture and tourism" (Mações 2018a, 11; 42-52). Adding to this argument is Bai Chunli, President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who calls the BRI a "road to innovation", with science, technology and innovation as "the core driving force for the BRI development" (2018, 130). To view the BRI beyond its initial phase of infrastructure development allows one to put forward analysis that links both the domestic and foreign policies pursued under China's rise over the period 2021 to 2050, the end-goal that is put forward as the year in which the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will be reached (Xi 2017).

In this regard, the first five years prior to the BRI's recalibration can be labelled as the early harvest years (Nouwens 2019) in which both old and new projects were brought together under the initiative's label. The second Belt and Road Forum then presented the formal recalibration of the project towards, as mentioned above, more detailed planning (Rolland et al. 2019). Specifically, one can describe this changing nature of the BRI as moving from infrastructure towards advanced tech, or, following the transformation of the Chinese economy, from connectivity to high-quality development. How then can the different phases of the BRI be documented? More specifically, as Zhai Dongsheng, affiliated with the National Development and Reform Commission notes, the focus during the first five years of the project was on the building of suitable design and policymaking mechanism, followed by the actual construction of infrastructure and the interconnectivity between these projects (Huo 2019). It is

furthermore noteworthy that in the BRI's Progress Report of 2019, industrial cooperation [产业合作] is upgraded to a sixth priority area under the BRI (Xinhua 2019a).

The “critical transition,” as China's economic transformation from high-speed to high-quality development by 2021 is called (K. Brown 2017a), is here put forward as the base to interpret the BRI. This chapter follows other authors who argue that this turn to high-quality development is the main dimension through which to approach the Belt and Road's recalibration, especially in the decade ahead (Hu, Angang; Wei Xing; Yan 2014; Magnus 2019). Yu Jie for example argues that China through the BRI seeks to “merge the supremacy of domestic economic interests with a grand international geopolitical gambit” (J. Yu 2019). Even more so, Tristan Kenderdine notes, the BRI is essentially “an attempt to recreate the China domestic industrial development model in external model in external geographies” (Kenderdine 2018). Here, it is important to note the end-goal of socialist modernisation that lies at the heart of this turn towards high-quality development [高质量发展转变].

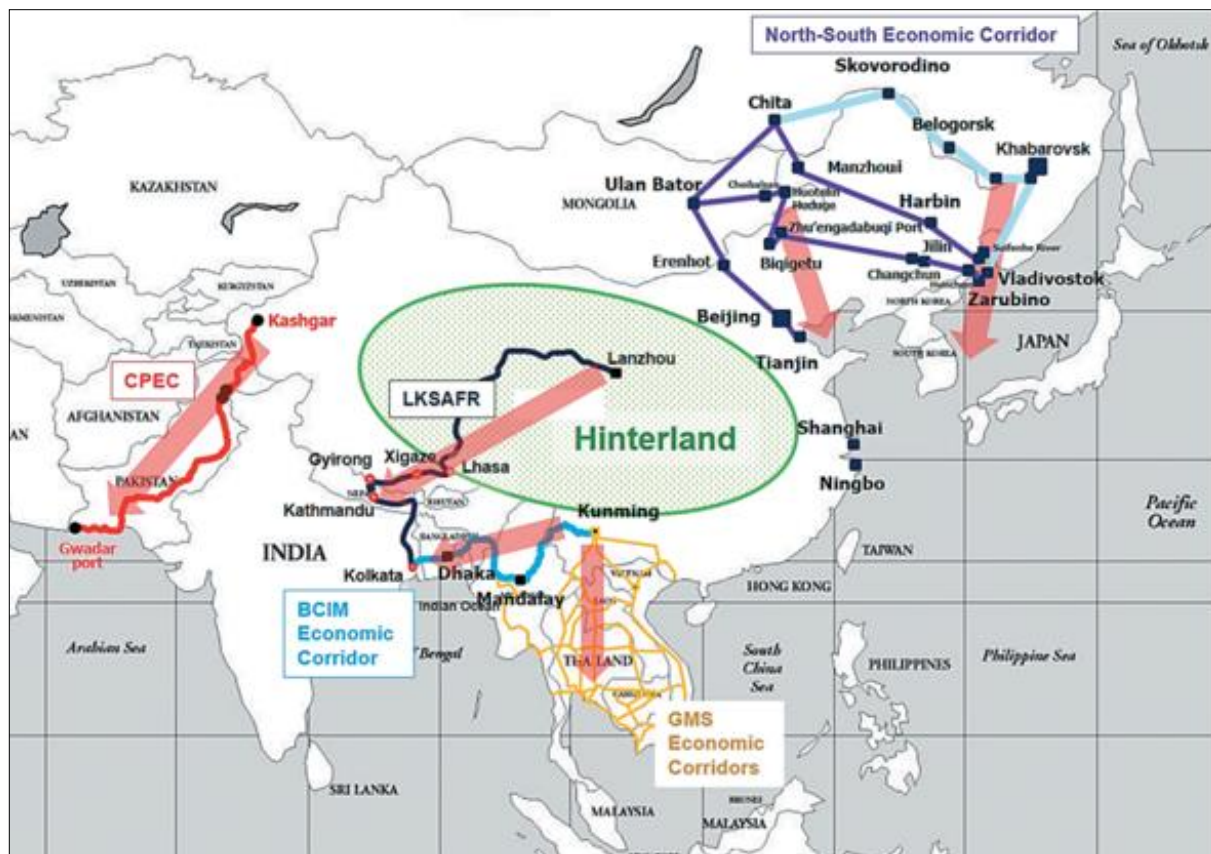
### Phase 3: Constructing a ‘Community of Common Destiny’

The multitude of old and new terms that straddle the Chinese political landscape often make it quite a complex endeavour to render these policies, ideas, and concepts into English and subsequently explaining them. Yet, it is important to properly understand these terms, as they do not present a “meaningless lexicon of diplomatic jargon” but instead “play an important role in wider policy implementation” of the Chinese state (Mardell 2017). The Community of Common Destiny [命运共同体], one of these concepts, has from the very beginning been linked to the BRI; and more especially in the Chinese aim of creating a regional order centred on China (Xi Jinping in Rolland 2019, 14-15). The Progress Report of 2019 explicitly connects the success of the BRI to the creation of such a community with a shared future, describing the

initiative as “China's contribution to promoting the transformation of the global governance system and economic globalisation” (Xinhua 2019a).

While commentators argue that this concept explains the Chinese pursuit of legitimacy as a normative model of development and is associated with the shift towards greater assertiveness under Xi Jinping (see S. N. Smith 2018), this chapter contends that the real story behind China's growing international character can be found with the predicament of the country's slowing domestic economy. Or as Xu Zhangrun argued: “Superficially, it might look all bright and shiny, but in reality, China is still a second-order economic power that has been pretty much forced to launch these measures for the sake of its own survival. This is all a far cry from becoming a ‘Red Empire’. [...] Domestic political considerations far outweigh what on the surface appears to be an expansive global mission. Yet, none of these moves [overseas] are a logical extension of core national interest. Certainly, they satisfy the needs of the dominant [Communist Party], but they hardly reflect any national logic” (Xu in Barmé 2019).

Other interpretations, within the context of the BRI, present China as an “infrastructure empire” that is exporting a model of order and development (Hoering 2018, 95). In other words, as Narins and Agnew argue: the “BRI encapsulates the Chinese leadership's desire to manage the political-economic tensions of promoting a new geopolitical identity for itself” (2019, 9). The development of infrastructure here figures as a means to extend China's political and economic influence (Crabtree n.d.). This chapter contends that China aims to connect the relevant countries to China's own future, in a common and shared destiny (Zhang 2018; L. Zeng 2016), in the BRI's third phase (Alden; Alves 2016; King; Du 2018). The reasons why it does so are decidedly connected to the situation of the domestic Chinese economy and the desire to bring about economic integration along the region of Asia.



**Image 8.** A more regionally-based interpretation of the Belt and Road Initiative and its economic corridors (Hu et al. 2020).

How, then, ought Chinese imperial motives, if any, be understood in light of the BRI and the Community of Common Destiny? Questions of empire naturally focus on, among other elements: the concentration of power, asymmetric relations between centre and periphery and between big and small countries, and networks of exploitation. To understand China's aspirations as the region's dominant power, the traditional concept of *Tianxia* (Babones 2019b; Dreyer 2015) and its associated tributary system is often invoked (Perdue 2015; Callahan 2008) in a historical approach towards the region (D. C. Kang 2019; Feng 2009). From the outlook of infrastructure, as captured in the BRI, others compare the initiative to the US-led Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War (Eichengreen 2018; Kozul-Wright, Richard; Poon 2019). These comparisons are interesting for two reasons. With the necessary

caveats in place, the first example refers to the interconnectivity that China seeks to construct, with itself at the centre; the second example, setting one step further, can enlighten us of the security dimensions of China's political and economic order, as encapsulated under the BRI (Hemmer, Christopher; Katzenstein 2002).

The continued belief in the original Chinese growth miracle is visible in the Asia's New Security Concept [亚洲新安全观] (Xi 2014a). Espoused by the Chinese President, this concept posits that development equals security; and security is necessary for development (Su 2019). More specifically, the development of infrastructure [基础设施建设] is described as "inseparable from the project of consolidating state power in China" (Oakes 2019, 68). An official report on the BRI even calls development a fundamental issue "key to solving everything" (Xinhua 2019a). Whether such reasonings on (collective) security, from an economic basis, are feasible or not; it is still necessary to take China's aspirations under the BRI seriously. David Harvey's description of the capitalist crisis of accumulation can be perceived as a fitting description of the predicament currently faced by China. Indeed, Harvey notes, there is a "general need for long-term investment in fixed, immobile capital to facilitate the mobility of other capitals and explores how such investments affect locational dynamics" (Jessop 2006, 147). Applied to the BRI, this spatial fix (Carmody et al. 2021; Akhter 2018) is secured through the notions of 'connective leadership' (Andornino 2017) and 'connective financing' (Bluhm, Richard; Dreher, Axel; Fuchs, Andreas; Parks, Bradley; Strange, Austin; Tierney 2018); further evidence for the mercantile approach China is taking towards its global initiative.

## 2. Interpreting the Belt and Road Initiative

According to Ang (2019b), the BRI's theoretical vagueness that is attributed to the policy documents *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Maritime Road* [推动共建丝绸之路经济带和 21 世纪海上丝绸之路的愿景与行动; hereinafter: Vision and Action Plan] (MOFCOM 2015) and *the Jointly Building the Belt and Initiative Progress, Contributions and Prospects* [共建“一带一路”倡议：进展、贡献与展望; hereinafter: Progress Report] report (Xinhua 2019a) translate into practical confusion. As a result, there is a clear need for clarification in terms of purpose, priorities, and scope in the ongoing unfolding of the BRI, with special attention to the need for greater quality, transparency and accountability in the projects that are pursued and, in particular, their associated lending practices (Gelpern et al. 2021). Summarising the difficulty of grasping the BRI, Jasper Roctus describes the initiative as “[deliberately] empty” and constructed for the long-term (2020).

Yuen Yuen Ang (2019b) traces this twin characteristic back to the policy campaigns of the Chinese state, which, opaque by design, essentially put forward a grand vision that is left for interpretation by to the top-down policy-making process of mass mobilisation and subsequent recalibration. Nadège Rolland reaches a similar conclusion when she argues that the international backlash to the BRI was largely based on a “negative reading of Beijing’s geostrategic motives.” That there exists a feedback loop that allows the Chinese polity to anticipate, assess, and adapt its policies is made evident by the signalled shift “from ‘broad brushstrokes’ to ‘detailed planning’” (2019, 12), following comments made by Xi Jinping at the conference for the promotion of the BRI (Huang, Yue; Zhang 2018). It is a process that Ang calls “directed improvisation:” the centre directs, local leaders improvise (Ang 2016). Is China’s BRI, then, a geopolitical (grand) strategy? While reserving an institutional analysis of the Party-state (Chung 2016; Lei, n.d.), its fragmented nature (Boucher, Aurélien; Taunay 2021;

Mertha 2009), and the role of its growing international character (Fravel, Taylor M.; Manion, Melanie; Wang 2021; Zeng, Jinghan; Jones 2019) for other studies, it is interesting to consider the BRI as a policy campaign or, indeed, a “centralized [campaign] of inspiration” (Dan 2021) that begets unpacking.

Perhaps the most convincing interpretation of these campaigns, and how they figure within the Chinese strategising, is by Jinghan Zeng (2020) who views these concepts, particularly when it concerns foreign policy, as “rather than completely empty or rhetorical [are employed as tools] of political communication:” declaring intent, asserting power, persuade, and calling for intellectual support (2020, 2-6). By consequence, rather than top-level design [顶层设计] and its associated notion of political steering from the centre (Schubert; Alpermann 2019), these slogans are not “coherent [nor] concrete strategic plans” (J. Zeng 2020, 1). Instead of a grand strategy, which would allow the BRI to transform China’s economic vulnerabilities into a tool for its continued rise to power (J. Lee 2019); the enduring problem of economic might’s difficult convertibility into political power, a basic fact of China’s rise (Beckley 2018; Kastner; Pearson 2021), reasserts itself again most prominently.

### **Claiming Territorial Space**

Instead of perceiving of the BRI as an “unbounded civilizational-state” (Grant 2018, 380), it is important, as will be explored below, to understand that China is, in fact, bounded by the territorial space in which it operates. It is exactly because of the particular spatial fix, that temporary solution to the problem of capitalist overaccumulation (see Jessop 2006), that tensions must come about as China moves beyond its national borders. Does the BRI, then, put China at the centre of the world? Or, as Raffaello Pantucci argued, is China shedding its grandiose plans for a more bilaterally focused BRI (2020)? A close connection between

infrastructure and affirmations of state power, territoriality (the claiming of space) and sovereignty is indeed visible, both in China's development of its domestic network of connectivity (Joniak-Lüthi 2015, 3) but also abroad through the Belt and Road Initiative (Hoering 2018). Here, one can note the concept of the 'bounded space,' which in essence refers to the exercise of state power over territory (Blackwill, Robert D.; Harris, Jennifer 2016, 24). It is, in other words, an interpretation of the theory of 'authoritarian modernisation' from a geopolitical point of view. This bounded space refers to a state's "spatial form of power" (Storey 2001, 15) and is an interesting concept in light of studying a state's growing international character. In their most basic form, states are 'spatial entities' that are made up of the four elements: territory, people, boundaries, and sovereignty (Storey 2001, 29-39). Here, it is important to ask what happens to these building blocks of the state when they are manifested abroad.

Another important caveat is the fact that states are no unitary actors but rather "sites of conflict and processes of fragmentation, decentralisation and internationalisation, pulling state apparatuses in contradictory directions" (Hameiri et al. 2019, 13; see also Agnew 1994). In this light, the 'political bargaining model' demonstrates how rather than a source of power and influence, the bounded space may well become a risk factor for the sending state, which is initially perceived as more powerful. A related warnings of this phenomenon of course refer to the notion of imperial overstretch, or that "awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the [state's] global interests and obligations is [...] far larger than the country's power to defend them all simultaneously" (Kennedy 1988, 515). In the case of China, authors such as Shi Yinhong argue against such a 'strategic overdraft' [战略透支] by the Chinese state (quoted in Cai 2016). Whether the Belt and Road can indeed be perceived as a straightforward, and therefore a (grand) strategic plan on the part of that Chinese state, is rendered rather more



nuanced as well by assertions of the various power centres at play within China's rise; both regionally (Chung 2016) and internationally (Hameiri; Jones 2016). While moving the discussion on the BRI firmly on economic strategy, these descriptions of the polycratic nature between the Chinese state and Chinese companies abroad already led to newly proposed paradigms such as that of state transformation (Hameiri; Jones 2016; Jones; Hameiri 2021) and of positioning China in the world (Fravel et al. 2021).

Furthermore, authors such as Majed Akther note that the infrastructure of the BRI "must traverse space already made heterogenous by uneven histories and state intervention" (2018, 226). It is an interesting application of the theory of the spatial fix on the example of the BRI. The presumed "space-smoothing effects" and logistical progress that the BRI is aimed to produce through its connective infrastructure faces important hurdles because of the spatial encroachment upon another state's territory that such a solution brings with it. The Chinese lack of experience in "navigating political sensitivities" on the international stage is a contributing factor (Small 2017, 86) in what is essentially the emergence of a development-insecurity nexus (Hameiri et al. 2018). As a result, China is faced with security externalities (Lim; Mukherjee 2017) and "caught between the operational imperatives of other regimes" (Narins; Agnew 2019, 3). In this situation, the limits of the China Solution as a non-interfering, apolitical example of development become visible through the provision of security and the militarisation of the BRI, despite its general perception as merely an economic undertaking, devoid of geopolitical considerations (Garlick 2018; Z. Zhang 2018).

Giving back agency to the BRI's recipient countries, which in relation to China are often perceived as lesser powers, connects theoretical considerations of the BRI more closely with a reality of bargaining, resistance, and local opposition (B. He 2018), as visible, for example, in the slowed down projects of the BRI across the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Aamir

2019; Siddiqui 2021). This approach stands in stark contrast to understandings of the BRI as an asymmetric relationship between the great power China and other, middle and small, powers (Hasegawa 2018; Boon; Ardy 2017; Conduit; Akbarzadeh 2018). It is a logic of might makes right that is perhaps best rendered in the Mellian Dialogue: "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must" (Boon; Ardy 2017). However, as this chapter demonstrates, here is an unavoidable dilemma between the patron and his client(s) that is visible within Chinese Belt and Road policymaking and which can best be understood within the hedging behaviour displayed by such presumably lesser states (Kuik 2008; Lim; Cooper 2015). This nuance has important implications for how our understanding of China's current imperial ambitions under the BRI or otherwise.

### **An Alternative Model of Development**

Speaking in 2009, Xi Jinping, then Vice President of the People's Republic of China, lashed out against foreigners critical of the country he would come to lead. China would not be exporting revolution, Xi said (quoted in Moore 2009). Yet nearly a decade later, a significantly different tone was struck by the man, now in the role of Secretary General of the CCP. At the nineteenth National Party Congress in 2017, he put forward Chinese wisdom and importantly, the China Solution [中国方案] as the theoretical basis for China's further engagement of the world. By promoting China's solution as an "alternative choice for those countries that wish to develop while preserving their autonomy" (Xi 2017), the Secretary General implicitly set Chinese development assistance off against the political conditionality commonly associated with Western aid programs (see for example Hackenesch 2015). While the political non-conditionality of China's engagement is questionable (Fang 2018), China's normative example

towards progress and modernity becomes clear through the promotion of the China Solution as a model of development that is an alternative to the Western one.

One important difference between the two is that China's focus on infrastructure is inspired by the wisdom of "build it and they will come"; or as the saying goes: "if you want to get rich, first build roads" [要想富先修路]. This "state-led investment in [hard] infrastructure (motorways, electricity, railways, roads, bridges, airports and ports," sets the China Solution off against the Western focus on "investment in 'soft' infrastructure [(gender equality, public health, anti-graft measures, environmental protection and support for global civil society)]" (Lo 2017, 23). From this perspective, the BRI is China's answer to quite literally bridge the infrastructure gap in the world through the export of its industrial overcapacity (labour and capital) at home. China's BRI is nevertheless the subject of much controversy and confusion, as it can mean everything and nothing all at once, from infrastructure projects to the more elusive people-to-people bonds. Grand strategy not so much in terms of changing the world but to advance its own domestic interests, as spurred by political deliberations at home (B. He 2018; M. Ye 2019).

Following along these lines, it is odd to see that the BRI can almost simultaneously be described as a political marketing ploy by the Chinese leadership (Babones 2019a; Fasslabend 2015), as well as a grand strategy (Khan 2018; Rolland 2017b). In order to seriously consider the spatiotemporal effects of the BRI, within the context of China's rise, however, both these explanations may be rejected. Another framework, that of state transformation, then, allows for a much more nuanced interpretation of both the BRI (Zeng, Jinghan; Jones 2019) and China's rise itself (Hameiri, Shahr; Jones 2016; Hameiri, Shahr; Jones, Lee; Heathershaw 2019). Noting the increasingly fragmented and decentralised consequences of a rising power's internationalisation, what emerges is a "Chinese-style regulatory state" going abroad in which

the diverse actors that nominally fall under the authority of the Party-state, “influence, interpret, or even ignore” policy guidelines (Zeng; Jones 2019, 1417). Much revealing about the BRI’s ultimate objectives, as well as its implementation, this interpretation of the policy process behind it is those earlier described policy campaign within Chinese politics (Ang 2018b). The BRI is, thus, a slogan, with decisions taken in principle, denoting the overall direction that the Chinese central leadership aims to go to, with specific policies to be implemented by the diverse lower-ranking actors.

The promotion of a distinct alternative model of development, as explained by the theory of ‘authoritarian modernisation’ presents one-party, indeed autocratic, states as agents of modernisation, contrary to Western paradigms of development which seek a great role for free market liberalism. Even more than predictions of a coming collapse of such systems, Samuel Huntington observes the general consensus that autocratic states are incompatible with the complex workings of modern society. This predicament of ineffective rule is true for “absolute monarchs, personalistic dictatorships, or military juntas,” Huntington (1970, 4), yet it is the one-party state that has the tools at hand for the “concentration and expansion of power” (1970, 12-13). By consequence, the Asian model of growth is described as the “political-economic strategy for achieving rapid development, social stability and national security based on an initial obsessive priority for economic growth” (Overholt 2018, 1).

While this chapter approaches China’s export of infrastructure under the BRI as mundane, there is nothing ordinary about China’s rise: it is, indeed, hard to argue with the economic development of China in recent decades (F. Zhang 2021). The same methods that brought the country fame and fortune, however, are now starting to pose risks to China’s further growth. Marxist interpretations, for instance, note that the growing international presence under China’s rise is spurred by the ‘spatial fix.’ The concept describes “capitalism’s insatiable drive

to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expand and geographical restructuring” (Harvey 2001, 24). Identifying this development in the Chinese case of the BRI, Majed Akhter observes that China employs “spatial strategies such as shifting geographies of capital investment and sinking capital in long-gestation projects like physical infrastructures” (2018, 230). What makes the Chinese alternative model of development so attractive for developing nations, then, is firstly because improved connectivity is expected to drive economic growth (Bluhm, Richard; Dreher, Axel; Fuchs, Andreas; Parks, Bradley; Strange, Austin; Tierney 2018). Secondly, there is the seeming absence of conditions that call for reforms to be made in the recipient country’s political sphere, particularly in terms of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy (Lo 2017, 23; Tseng, Huan-Kai; Krog 2017).

### Debt Implications

In the absence of an official databank of the BRI, several unofficial, yet illuminating ones are available, including those by the *Mercator Institute for China Studies* (Merics 2018), with 2,500 entries; *AidData* (n.d.), which has 3,458 Chinese government-funded projects; and the *Reconnecting Asia Project* (CSIS n.d.), with 13,973 projects (as of September 2019). The sheer magnitude of the projects that are currently pursued under the BRI does not allow for an exhaustive analysis of these projects within the limited scope of this thesis’ research topic. Instead, and based on this chapter’s more general approach towards the BRI phenomenon as part of understanding China’s rise, this chapter offers an introduction to what might yet spell out to be a debt trap for China, in an opposite direction as to how the BRI is often perceived.

Reports on the debt implications of the BRI have noted that it “is unlikely that [the initiative] will be plagued with widescale debt sustainable problems [but] it is also unlikely that the [BRI] will avoid any instances of debt problems among its participating countries” (Hurley et al. 2018). Similarly, while debt in these countries is on the rise, it is reported as remaining

“manageable for most countries” (Kong et al. 2019). Most at risk are countries including Djibouti, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, the Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan and Montenegro (Center for Global Development in Deloitte 2019, 7). The laudable side of the BRI, a report by AidData finds, can be found with what is called ‘connective financing’ away from “the excessive concentration of economic activity in a small number of cities or regions,” or the “diffusion of economic activity in developing countries [thereby escaping] inefficient spatial equilibria” (Bluhm et al. 2018, 8-9).

At the same time, while the benefits from “improved infrastructure [are] not in question, doing so while incurring an unsustainable debt burden can offset such benefits” (Kong et al. 2019, 1). This debt burden, as demonstrated by the political bargaining model (PBM), can nevertheless fall on the shoulders of the sending state. Indeed, the white elephant projects that are often reported as being part of the BRI underlie a fear that the initiative is primarily a strategic ploy to gain leverage over other states, as demonstrated by investments in undertakings of which the economic viability is questionable at best (Small 2017, 84). These white elephants and roads to nowhere refer to projects that are economically not viable yet are the subject of great investment (Rolland 2017a; Larmer 2017). Arguably a result of China’s “build first and they will come” approach to infrastructure, such faltering projects were reported in countries including Pakistan (Economist 2017), Sri Lanka (Marlow 2018) and Kenya (Herbling, David; Li 2019).

Yet the BRI’s reality can be described as more one of “renegotiation [rather] than cancellation” (Pantucci 2018). This evolution is striking, according to Andrew Small who observes in the case of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that “in the past, even when plans were agreed on, myriad obstacles and concerns were used as excuses for the Chinese side to slow down or shelve projects entirely” (2017, 82). This example is now even moving towards

the second phase (Rehman 2019). It is interesting to once again refer to the current backlash against the BRI (Balding 2018). Of course, this chapter employs a model loaned from studies on international business dealings, which describes the relationship between MNEs (or Transnational Companies, TNCs) and host nations. Here, a major divergence is the Chinese preference for authoritarian states, whereas a company aiming to invest abroad might prefer democracies (Jakobsen 2006, 74). The Chinese emphasis on bilateral dealings with other authoritarian states, that are like-minded but do not necessarily share the same ideological thinking is simply for the quicker decision-making, a feat often attributed to those kinds of states.

In fact, in bilateral dealings between two autocratic states, the opposite result of the PBM is often visible. Whereas democratic institutions are a powerful incentive for the private business enterprises, these same institutions become a source of tension for the autocratic sovereign investor, as they can greatly impact the risk of policy reversal following elections (Jakobsen 2006, 74). Similarly, nationalist sentiment within developing nations might contribute further to investments by an autocratic state being regarded with wary suspicion (Jakobsen 2006, 68). Indeed, neither of the countries that form part of the BRI even approximate the level of central control that the Chinese Communist Party, as a Leninist one-party state, enjoys. This important difference shows that the institutional arrangements of countries act as a moderating factor of the PBM described above. Democracies, Jo Jakobsen (2006) argues, and in particular their political institutions are a greater source of risk assessment mechanisms and (labour) norms and standards, while at the same time enforcing their lack of flexibility (Jakobsen 2006, 68; 74; see also Hendriks 2017). Interestingly, it is noted that BRI renegotiations took place, for the most part, after a leadership transition following elections

(Pantucci 2018). Particular examples include Malaysia under PM Mahathir Mohamad (Parameswaran 2019; Sipalan 2019), and Pakistan under PM Imran Khan (Anderlini et al. 2018).

Ultimately, the question that ought to be asked is what exactly China trying to create – or, indeed, achieve with the BRI? The story of the project naturally emphasises connective financing: the literal creation, through various infrastructure, of connectivity and the associated objective of economic growth. However, a reality of disempowering and marginalising local populations in economic decision-making and institutions (Giersch 2020) sits behind the positive development that the BRI supposedly brings. There is also a certain tension between the mercantile character of the Chinese undertakings abroad and its (settler) colonial nature at home (M. Clarke 2020); the latter infamously centred on the region of Xinjiang, a pivotal area within the BRI's gateway to Central Asia. The debt burdens of these foreign products and services provided by China, whether to export excess material and labour or to capture markets and territory are, nonetheless, the main focus of this chapter.

### **3. China Going Abroad: Shaping and Being Shaped**

With an expanding international presence, it is clear that China's rise does not happen in a vacuum (Fravel, Taylor M.; Manion, Melanie; Wang 2021). Unlike the Cold War, however, the strategic situation for states today is no longer cut along the traditional rivalry between liberalism and communism. Presently, the assessment of economic and security interests requires small and middle powers to hedge their bets, by not choosing either of two camps (Tunsjø 2013; Kuik 2008; 2016). In so doing, these states are able to offset risks "by pursuing multiple policy options that are intended to produce mutually counteracting effects" (Kuik 2008, 163). Here, the patron-client dilemma is worth noting. It is a problem that China confronts in its domestic political system (Chung 2016; Lei, n.d.) and with its companies that are operating abroad (Hameiri et al. 2018; Y. Kang 2019); as well as with its foreign relations. Importantly,



it renders a better picture of reality than the prevalent understanding of top-down patronage envisioned by the concept of clientelism.

### **Transforming the state**

For the BRI, specifically, a similar problem is identified between the Chinese state and China's state-owned (and private) companies, often assumed to be mere agents of a (geo-economic) foreign policy (Garlick 2019b; 2019a) but whose "responsiveness to the Party's mandate" is not necessarily aligned (Liu; Zhang 2019); necessitating state control over economic statecraft by state-owned and private enterprises alike. The divergences in the relationship between the Chinese Party-state and recipient countries along the BRI can manifest themselves abroad in the same way as they do in a country's domestic situation, leading to "limited leverage" for the sending state "despite having poured billions of dollars of aid into [the other's] economy" (Waheed 2017). The dilemma for Beijing, then, is "how [the leadership] can allow a loosening of control for Chinese firms beyond its borders and still maintain a high degree of economic and political control over such firms and actors [...] within its territorial boundaries" (Narins; Agnew 2019, 23). Rather than presenting China as a monolithic titan, it is worthwhile to investigate how this dilemma might emerge in China's foreign policy. China's trade presence on the African Continent, for instance, could potentially produce the rather paradoxical effect in which investments in fact strengthen the receiving state's capacity to diversify its diplomatic relations, often at the behest of the Chinese Party-state (Carmody et al. 2019).

China's securing of its overseas interests illustrates this dilemma perhaps most clearly (Zou, Yizheng; Jones 2019; Ghiselli 2020). In terms of China's foreign engagements, the Party-state's principle of mutual non-interference in internal affairs necessitates its role in the United Nation's Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and humanitarian interventions; as well as China's support for the organisation's peacekeeping operations (Shesterinina 2016; Fung 2018; 2019b;

Fang et al. 2018; Y. He 2019). This chapter is more concerned with how this adherence to non-interference plays out in China's engagement with the world, in which the principle is often criticised as being inconsistently applied (C. Zheng 2016; Aidoo; Hess 2015). Ruben Gonzalez-Vicente notes that the principle "enhances bilateralism and state-based decision-making" and defines it as "a series of rules of conduct and active interventions that act to sustain state-based regionalism architectures. [...] It is a very particular norm of political and economic engagement, which is at odds with some other forms of supranational or regulatory regionalism" (2015, 206-207). The universalising ambition of the China model here stands in stark contrast with the recurring argument that China does not wish to impose itself on other.

As such, China's non-interference principle is a semi-formal institution, Gonzalez-Vicente contends, that figures as "a particular form of interventionism that is conducive to a specific form of regionalisation [and works through] at multiple levels *except at the state-to-state level*, where the Chinese government respects the particularities of its central state counterparts and legitimises their rule" (2015, 213-214). This approach, which emphasises the "regulatory power [of the state] and executive-based bilateralism (Gonzalez-Vicente 2015, 218) is similar to the interpretation of the BRI as an order and development model that is not prescriptive and is more in favour of passive revolution within the countries it touches upon (Hoering 2018). It is within this reinforced role of the state that one has to perceive the "rescaling [of] economic governance back to the national state, [...] which has become a facilitator of a business-centric logic of development [and modernisation]" (Gonzalez-Vicente 2015, 218). This model of the regulatory state stands, of course, in stark contrast to the neo-liberal state which promotes "business through deregulation [and] the rescaling of economic governance to subnational and regional institutions." In brief, China's norm of non-interference is the polar opposite of US' ambition to spread democracy (Gonzalez-Vicente 2015, 205; 218).

Vijay Gokhale, reviewing articles by two foremost Chinese scholars, puts it best when noting the implication that “China is a developing country with ‘Chinese characteristics’ somehow implies that its political system and governance model cannot merely be exported to other countries” (Gokhale 2021). It would nevertheless be foolish to ignore the universalising tendencies of the China solution. While the argument that China does not impose its model but acts as a potential filter (Breslin 2019; 2021, 222) on others is not to be overlooked, it is a false debate to suggest that the China model will inevitably be transported and imposed on other countries. A study of the BRI gives further credence to interpretations of China’s rise from a domestic perspective, rather than an imperialistic one. Whereas democracy promotion is considered a part of US foreign policy, non-interference may be the mirror image for the Chinese case (Gonzalez-Vicente 2015).

### **Interference Abroad**

Necessitated by China’s (global) rise, there is, however, an evident and ongoing re-interpretation of the country’s non-interference, with such concepts as ‘creative involvement’ [创造性介入] and ‘constructive involvement’ [建设性介入] emerging, showcasing China’s increasing conditionality in its assistance and investment around the world. However, there is the inherent risk in this state-centric vision of the ‘obsolescing bargaining model’ (OBM) or in its updated form, the ‘political bargaining model’ (PBM; see Eden, Lorraine; Lenway, Stefanie; Schuler 2005), emerging. Derived from studies on international business that focus on the bargaining relationship between multinational enterprises and host countries, notably in the oil industry (Ramamurti 2001; Orazgaliyev 2018), this model describes the shift of bargaining power to the host country. In this situation, the MNE’s assets are essentially “transformed into hostages,” making its initial bargaining power obsolete. Each respective actor in this dilemma

has different interests at heart. For the sending entity these include “seeking” markets, resources, efficiency, legitimacy, and strategic assets. In turn, the recipient entity is interested in “broader economic, social, and political objectives through its negotiations with the foreign” (Eden, Lorraine; Lenway, Stefanie; Schuler 2005, 253-261).

Applied to interstate relations, this specific patron-client dilemma lends itself to approach the infrastructure projects under the BRI (Yasheng Huang 2019), especially because of the attention it pays to the institutional character of states and the impact of exponentially growing stakes according to their size, or here, the amount invested. This model is summarised by John Maynard Keynes’ famous adage: “If you owe your bank a hundred pounds, you have a problem. But if you owe your bank a million pounds, it has” (Keynes in Yasheng Huang 2019). It is here that the BRI might potentially become a deadweight for the PRC, with money in non-productive investments may boost economic activity in the near future but reduce it over the long term. By creating such a ‘bounded space’ through the BRI, China avoids having to directly interfere into the affairs of those countries. The real challenge thus does not lie with the 1:1 copy of a tried and tested model but more explicitly with ensuring the continued growth of the Chinese economy, that is now undergoing a fundamental transformation.

It is furthermore interesting to note that while the official translation of *Zhongguo fang'an* reads ‘China Solution,’ the second part of this concept can be more properly translated as ‘proposal’ or even ‘plan of action.’ Without spending too much time on linguistic considerations, China is increasingly aiming to carve out international space for its own further rise to power, while externalising the order and development to those countries abroad through its avoidance of direct interference. To understand this prudence on the part of China, one ought to go back to the abovementioned Bandung Conference which formally adopted the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (和平共处五项原则). Derived from the Panchsheel Treaty

between China and India just one year earlier, these principles reflect the wish of the developing countries to put forward a new and principled take on international relations. Here, it is interesting to note that studies on China's foreign policy are quick to point out the country's adherence to the Five Principles of Co-existence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence (Zhenmin Liu 2014; Sharma, Vishakha; Ghildial 2014).

Chief among these is the principle of non-interference. Through this “unconditional respect for state sovereignty,” Denis Tull argues, “Beijing is prepared to defend autocratic regimes that commit human rights abuses and forestall democratic reforms for narrow ends of regime survival” (2006, 476). The first Defence White Paper since 2015, released by the China's State Council Information Office in July 2019, reiterated China's commitment to the Five Principles.

China is committed to developing friendly cooperation with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. It respects the rights of all peoples to independently choose their own development path and stands for the settlement of international disputes through equal dialogue, negotiation and consultation. China is opposed to interference in the internal affairs of others, abuse of the weak by the strong, and any attempt to impose one's will on others.

中国坚持在和平共处五项原则基础上发展同各国的友好合作，尊重各国人民自主选择发展道路的权利，主张通过平等对话和谈判协商解决国际争端，反对干涉别国内政，反对恃强凌弱，反对把自己的意志强加于人 (Lu 2019)

What is interesting in this most recent White Paper is the emphasis on nearby issues that seem to frame the People's Liberation Army as essentially a regionally focused military force (Gunness 2021). Important here are the references that are made to Taiwan, whereas minimal deployments on the international stage are limited to the protection of the country's own interests and constricted by its non-interference principle. Following the country's commitments to peacekeeping and anti-piracy missions (Y. He 2019; Fung 2019a), China's

international presence has nevertheless grown gradually on par with the Belt and Road. The establishment of what China calls a ‘logistical support base’ [后勤保障设施] in Djibouti (Styan 2020; Wan, Yan; Zhang, Lujia; Xue, Charlie Qiuli; Xiao 2020; Cabestan 2020), for example, was followed by reports of potentially similar military outposts in countries such as Pakistan (Sutton 2020), Cambodia (Heang 2021), and Tajikistan (G. Shih 2019). Similar to Chinese investments under the BRI, there are also increased concerns that China may present a challenge to the hegemonic position of the United States through these bases.

### **China as a Filter**

As a result, international commentary is increasingly worried about a replay of the colonial pattern under the BRI, especially through the creation of Chinese dependencies abroad (Aghebi, Motolani; Virtanen 2017). In such a relationship, China is essentially creating a bounded space, linking the countries in question to its future development. Such a reading of the BRI presents China as imposing itself upon these recipient countries. Yet turning this logic around allows for an interesting query, problematising the very nature of the BRI between theory and practice. Studies on small and middle power behaviour have already demonstrated the many methods with which these countries can survive, despite the adverse hand they are dealt (Lim, Darren J., & Cooper 2015; Marston, Hunter; Bruce 2020). While Gonzalez-Vicente is correct to point out that China’s non-interference exists within “the wider networks of social and developmental dynamics” (2015, 213), it is too easy to reduce the non-interference principle to the realm of apolitical and win-win business logic, itself seen as a result of non-ideological pragmatism beginning under Deng Xiaoping (Alden, Chris; Zheng 2018, 41; Cao 2013).

In other words, rather than perceiving of China’s goals as power *for power’s sake*, this chapter agrees with Stein Ringen who argues that one possibility of China’s policymaking is

that “purpose is given by an official ideology, and citizens are subordinate to the advancement of the ideologically defined purpose” (2016, 47-57). Indeed, this chapter argues that the goal of socialist modernisation is fundamental to our understanding of the policies pursued by the Chinese state as not being a demonstration of “value-neutral, culture-free pragmatism” (see Pye 1988, 75; also mentioned earlier). Similarly, this ideological backdrop determines the identity of China on the international stage, studies of which have described the country as “socialist country” [社会主义国家]; “largest developing country” [最大的发展中国家]; but also, as moving from semi-revolutionary to an integrated member of the international community between the 1970s and the 1990s (Nie 2016; Y. He 2019, 257-258). Yet, William Kirby argues:

“The history of the PRC is simply incomprehensible without a strongly international perspective. Its ruling party, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), was the creation of a foreign power, and it began its rules of the country under foreign protection. The early PRC was a leading actor in a global revolutionary movement as well as in a military-political-economic alliance that stretched from Berlin to Canton. [...] When Mao Zedong declared that the Chinese people had finally ‘stood up’ [...] he made it clear that they would not stand alone but would stand with the Soviet Union and its allies. [...] If one needs proof that Mao remained an ‘internationalist’ (or better, a universalist) even as he broke with the USSR, it is in the triumph of his politics and ideology over China’s national interests in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when he would place at risk the very existence of the Chinese nation and people to maintain his own conception of the Chinese and world revolution” (Kirby 2006, 872; 874; 890).

Similarly, the fact that today’s China is able to engage the world is a result of its impressive economic growth during the period after 1978, an economic miracle that has now nevertheless reached a tipping point. It is but little surprise that the contemporary period is described as a phase after which there is no longer any point of reference available (Magnus 2018, 53-74). Yet is this really the case? Perhaps the real Maoist revival under Xi Jinping (Minzner 2018; Zhao 2016) lies not with the increased authoritarianism, but with this finding of the connection with the early Maoist past. At the basis lies the great contradiction of the Xi Jinping period, who is championing globalisation while “restricting the free flow of capital, information, and goods between China and the rest of the world” (Economy 2018, x). The shift from Mao Zedong, over Deng Xiaoping and to Xi Jinping thus was not one away from ideology

and towards pragmatism, but one from utopianism towards a “quest for tangible and quantifiable material goals” (Gonzalez-Vicente 2015, 209). Here, the mundane export is understood as earthly, and material as opposed to the lofty ideals of China’s socialist ideology but is certainly not dull, unexciting or lacking in interest, as the plethora of studies on the BRI show.

Understanding the contemporary imperial ambitions of the Chinese state is not a matter that can be defined away from revolutionary ideals and towards “‘win-win’ economic deals” (Gonzalez-Vicente 2015, 209) but rather touches upon how questions of sovereignty and geopolitical actions of the Chinese nation-state are manifested on the international front. Referring back to the earlier argument made within this thesis, that the story of the BRI lies with the domestic situation of China, one can refer to Xi Jinping’s China dream of bringing the Chinese nation-state to its Great Rejuvenation [中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦]. Encapsulated within this China Dream are two centenary goals of struggle [两个一百年奋斗目标] through which, each respectively referring to the creation of the CCP in 1921 and the founding of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese leadership aims to bring the country to the level of a “moderately well-off society” [小康社会] between 2021 and 2035 and to reach the status of a “great power under socialist modernisation” by 2050 (Xi 2017). Thus defined, China’s rise intends to bring about the Great Unity in the World [世界大同]; or in terms of the BRI: it is “Xi Jinping’s personal attempt to enlist China’s infrastructure-industrial complex into the party’s quest to reshape the international order” (Greer 2020; Zhao 2020).

It is interesting to note that this global community, imagined on a Chinese footing and to one Chinese commentator the solution to contemporary tensions between the US and China (R. Huang 2019). Much like in the debate on China’s rise, triumph and failure stand directly opposed. These “problematic prognostications” (Blanchard 2020) on the supposed state of the



BRI, or China's rise for that matter, is reflected in predictions of its retreat in the face of mounting challenges. Similarly, recent studies have interpreted the current "reboot" of the initiative as a reaction to the international backlash that China has experienced (Rolland 2019). It is here of course impossible to solve this open-ended question other than to demonstrate that the binary choice is false and mistakenly upheld in the debate on China's rise. Studying the unfolding of the BRI, then, may be a first attempt at understanding this ascendant development.

## 4. Conclusion

Former US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles aptly noted that "fears [...] divide the free nations, negate their *sense of common destiny* and jeopardize continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid" (Dulles 1952). It is an interesting description of the future as a product of the natural course of history that is, nevertheless, impacted by national considerations. While one can use the unfolding of the BRI to discern several phases (quantitative and qualitative) within China's rise, the global project is beset with challenges that may seem, at various points in time, to undermine that very project of common destiny represented by the rise of China. The BRI, then, is not only indicative of the challenges that China is facing in its engagement with the world; but also demonstrates that the inevitable dialectics that sit behind China's rise are nothing but artificially constructed and, as is the case with other similar developments, subject to "the normal coefficient of miscalculation, stupidity, inefficiency and bad luck" (Berlin 2004). That failure to accurately predict that what is to come, despite claims to the contrary, however, still begets understanding. The BRI, thus, cannot be perceived as a single (grand) strategy (Narins, Thomas P.; Agnew 2019) and may, in fact, be more accurately described as a policy campaign characterised by directed improvisation (Ang 2018b).

Because of the increasingly international character of China, as an actual result of its rise, the BRI may now or in the future run through various conflict zones which necessitate the

potential deployment of its security forces. As a result, these developments are not intended to directly challenge US supremacy but, first and foremost, to secure China's own interests. China's brand of evolutionary materialism manifests itself concretely in the deployment of the development and order model promoted by the Chinese state both at home and abroad. Does China then present an alternative to the liberal models of development and governance? Indeed, is the real challenge presented by China one of modernity? An interesting query asks whether the PRC will instead be able to reach its goal of socialist modernisation without such changes in its basic political character; while transporting that model abroad in a challenge to the Western model of liberal democracy.

This chapter is concerned with how the country's domestic goal of socialist modernisation [社会主义现代化] manifests itself abroad, with the Belt and Road as a vehicle for China's continued economic growth. The approach that is here taken by the Chinese state is essentially a reflection of the country's own development experience and is coined in the expression "if you want to get rich, first build a road" [要想富先修路], which posits infrastructure development as the necessary precondition of growth. It is a point echoed by Lene Hansen who, for example, makes an interesting observation when she argues that identity concerns are inextricably linked and reconstructed within a country's foreign policymaking. Indeed, Hansen notes: "politicians rarely sit down and have an 'identity discussion' separate from a consideration of which policies can be pursued, nor are foreign policies decided without deliberations on identity" (Hansen 2006, 26).

The emergence of a more globally positioned China, itself a direct result of China's rise and the material preconditions and limits of its capitalism that necessitated such a rise, will also put forward the country as a novel model of development: a China model, based entirely on the Chinese experience since 1949 that is at once illiberal and led by a democratic centre. This new

Chinese “filter” (Breslin 2019) for developing nations to adopt, thus, does not equate to the export of China’s ideology as is: ideological conflict plays out in much more mundane ways and is indicative of a lack of understanding into the ideological nature of China. In what is perhaps an ironic contradiction, China’s growing international presence stems exactly from its slowing economic at home. As a result, China’s further rise begets engagement of the world, despite attempts of isolation to the contrary. Seeing the BRI within the light of China’s rise (and more specifically its socialist modernisation) allows the perception of the initiative to move beyond one that is solely based on infrastructure to include the broader goal of economic integration (with Central Asia in particular).

The BRI, much like China’s rise, exists both in theory and in practice. As such, neither is set in stone and the discrepancies between the reality and the debates surrounding it vary widely. It is for this reason that the BRI, as a vehicle for the rise of China’s rise, is important to study. Its contemporary character, however, makes it so that “the geopolitical possibilities of this still nascent set of Chinese government-inspired infrastructural and institutional frameworks [...] cannot, at this stage, be accurately/verifiably mapped because what it currently represents geopolitically is still unknown” (Narins, Thomas P.; Agnew 2019) It is but one of many limitations of the research into such a recent topic that leaves much room for interpretation. More interesting, then, is to again view the domestic situation as indicative for the further unfolding of the BRI, allowing for a discerning of various phases within this project. Based on the timelines put forward by the Chinese leadership, this chapter suggests the following crude classification: phase one of infrastructure development (2013-2021); phase two of access to technologies and markets (2021-2035); and phase three of manufacturing and services (2035-2050).

In summary, the BRI is not to be interpreted in terms of the old empire that ruled the Chinese geography. Such an approach exaggerates this global initiative launched in 2012-2013 as a grand strategy akin to that of the Silk Roads and, in a further extension of this logic, the revival of the tributary system of China's dynastic history. Instead, the BRI is an intricate part of the story of China's rise and, for domestic reasons of economic policy, now serves as one of its primary drivers. This interpretation of necessity stands opposed to other arguments that see within the initiative a merely exploitative logic, rendered, in particular, by post-colonial tendencies. While China emerged as an international construction powerhouse, the reading suggest that what is being built are bridges that no one needs and roads that no one uses. Construction is, however, only the initial part of the story. With China's rise, successful or otherwise, an increasing amount of influence and visibility is to be expected. In other words: "Even if Belt and Road spending ends up being a third of what was originally forecast, China may still have gotten its money's worth. It will have broadened its influence in countries that are potential providers of natural resources, as well as future markets, and gained allies in international arenas such as the United Nations" (Prasso 2020).

# Chapter 5:

## China's Rise and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Decisive or Exposing its Inadequacies?

PERHAPS ONE OF the greatest questions pertaining to an understanding of China's continuing rise to power is whether the CCP, as a political organisation, can withstand and repel not only existential challenges to its rule but also those unexpected developments that may quickly escalate to a level of crisis (McGregor, n.d.; Farrell 2020). Such black swan events, as they are called (Aven 2013; Flage; Aven 2015) are largely outside the realm of predictability or, in any event, not as easily anticipated let alone prevented. In a study on China's future, Ci Jiwei summarises this point as follows: "the shape and timing of any legitimisation crisis will be determined chiefly by the trajectory of the CCP's communist revolutionary legacy than by contingencies of its performance." Contrariwise to a prevailing argument that at least since the 1980s, economic pragmatism has curbed ideology in China; Ci contends that the CCP still enjoys a high degree of ideological legitimacy that can be traced back to 1949. Taking revolutionary legitimacy as its framework, distinct from one that is performance-based, allows Ci to tangibly map out the Chinese Party-state's legitimacy as restricted in time, rather than leaving it open-ended. Indeed, as discussed earlier, Ci predicts that around 2029, the CCP will be faced with a "crisis of political authority the likes of which it has never experienced before" (Ci 2019, 37; 70).

The idea of discussing the temporality (of or related to time) behind China's rise is a further attempt to correct the tropes ascribing a long-term strategic vision to the Chinese Party-state (Mahbubani 2018; Pillsbury 2016), whether over Western democracies in terms of political decision-making (Skibsted 2014; Gilardoni 2017) or when faced with externalities (Roach 2019; J. Zhang 2019). Secretary-General Xi Jinping's speech for the Lunar New Year of 2020 held an important message in this regard. Lauding the Chinese sense of time and urgency, the Chinese President emphasised that China had to "stay abreast of the time and fight against the disease" [同时间赛跑与病魔较量] (Xinhua 2020a). It is a message reminiscent of the ubiquitously British phrase urging the public '*To Keep Calm and Carry On,*' which describes a form of "benevolent statism" (Hatherley 2016) during worsening conditions. The sense of urgency embedded in this early sentiment is interesting since, in the Chinese response, the COVID-19 crisis emerges as an organising principle, a reinvigorated summary of the pre-existing trajectory of China's rise before the pandemic. As such, the ongoing crisis stands as a first micro-example of the CCP turning aspiration into actuality, in an accelerated push towards completing the revolution (Berlin 2004).

The rhetorical device (see below) which turns crisis into opportunity, however, is revealing in its initial hesitancy and ought not to be ignored in favour of a more traditional outlook that remains deterministic in nature. Moreover, understanding the early situation of COVID-19 as it occurred in China during that early period of 2019 to 2020 is related to one of the most fundamental debates of such pandemics: that of its origins (Sachs 2021; Worobey 2021). Stating this question politically, rather than the medical diagnosis of the disease's zoonotic, if man-made nature and its spread, the aim of this chapter is to contribute to this debate by a temporally minded approach to the early situation and its place within Chinese politics. To do so, one of the most dimensions that is most crucial in understanding China's

contemporary rise is through the responsiveness of the country's governance institutions. An exploration of the medical side of this question is largely outside the reach of this chapter, as well as the knowledge of the author. It is for this reason that it is mostly concerned with the governance institutions related to the Communist Party of China itself. Examples of approaches include Leninist response to the initial crisis (V. C. Shih 2021), the relative satisfaction with the national government's approach (Wu et al. 2021), as well as the related notion of the CCP as a mobilising party in stemming the spread of the virus (Renninger 2020).

## **1. COVID-19 as a Hindrance to China's Rise**

Concerning the early pandemic situation in China, Minxin Pei argues that “a brief window [of] tenuous [...] control over information” not only in terms of censorship but also the transmission of such intelligence within government exposed the fragility of the Chinese system (2020). It is of interest to this chapter to unpack this statement further in terms of China's rise itself. One argument that received a lot of attention, is that China successfully halted the crises of infections, lockdown, and related occurrences. Consequently, a possibly disastrous event changed into an opportunity for political gain. Relative success in an ongoing global pandemic, as Chenchen Zhang demonstrates, however, is mostly fuel for national narratives rather than a reflection of the actual reality as it continues to unfold (2020) So striking indeed was the official discourse of transforming crisis into opportunity [化危到机], bending weakness into strength [从弱到强], and rising amid turmoil [多难兴邦] (W. Wang 2020; S. Yan 2020) that feature as an introduction to the more ideologically sound slogan that would re-enter official parlance not much later.

The notion that the world is experiencing turmoil and undergoing “great changes unseen in a century” [百年未有之大变局] is more aptly applied than ever before. Explored by Rush

Doshi (2021), this turn of phrase emerges as simultaneously a shorthand for the ideological trajectory of China's rise, as well as the deterministic nature of rise and decline that it holds within itself. Putting forward the COVID-19 pandemic as proof for Chinese success and failure elsewhere (most notably in the USA) stands, of course, in opposition to the mirrored, yet similar argument that the pandemic and particularly its origins are evidence for the ultimate collapse of China. From the perspective of Chinese state media, it is, then, little surprise that:

In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has become a new variable and catalyst for the unprecedented changes taking place around the world. This once-in-a-century pandemic not only adds to the sluggishness of the already weak recovery of the world economy, but more importantly, it highlights the serious shortcomings of the international system under the leadership of Western capitalism, declaring the complete bankruptcy of neoliberalism, accelerating the fluctuation of international forces, making more obvious the trend of 'East rising, West falling', [as well as pushing] the deepening of the great changes that are taking place"

特别要看到，2020 年新冠肺炎疫情全球大流行，成为世界百年未有之大变局的新变量、催化剂。这次百年一遇的大疫情，不仅让复苏乏力的世界经济雪上加霜，更重要的是它凸显出西方资本主义主导下国际体系的严重弊端，宣告了新自由主义的彻底破产，加快了国际力量此消彼长，使国际格局“东升西降”的趋势更加显著，推动大变局不断向纵深发展 (People's Daily 2021; Own translation, A.D.).

These are further illustrations to the caricatural depictions described as *Sinophrenia* that see an either-or choice, depending on one's stance, between victory of the one and failure of the other. Such a framework retains but little empirical value because of the lack of direct evidence and is, for the most part, only valuable in terms of constructing narratives, which is not the concern of this thesis.

## **China and the World before COVID-19**

It can be argued that the years of increasing international pressure on China between 2016 and 2019 came together in the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Indeed, following a period of increasing pressure on China since at least the middle of the previous decade, in which China increasingly had to absorb pressure on its rising ambitions, Xi Jinping in 2019 signalled a similar message. During the seventieth anniversary of the PRC, an event that should otherwise



have been one of imminent glory; this message read “do not forget the original aspiration, remember the mission” (Xi 2019d). The notion as captured within this chapter, that this otherwise highly progressive nation came to a standstill between January and March, before the spread of the disease supposedly reached its peak, exposes fallacies of the Chinese regime’s long-term orientation. This ability to think over the long-term does here not refer to a form of an essentialist trait attributed to a Chinese psyche (Hofstede; Minkov 2010; Mahbubani 2018); nor does it follow the presumably unrestricted advantage that China possesses over Western liberal democracies earmarked by electoral cycles (Pillsbury 2016).

Instead, this notion of time speaks the teleology of the socialist red future as espoused by the Chinese Party-state. Here, the argument captured within this chapter diverts somewhat from the theoretical framework mentioned above by noting that both the CCP’s long-term orientation over the period 1949-2049 as much as contingencies upon its rule are important, particularly in how these latter incidents might change the party’s calculus, but even more so how they might impact its ability to reach those goalposts. This is nothing new of course, as demonstrated by the institutional challenges presented by contingencies (see above). This chapter follows this contention by arguing that to understand China’s rise and its future trajectory, it is important to both understand the long-term orientation of the Chinese Party-state as much as it to study how contingencies might influence how the CCP works towards its vision of the future. Here of course, the Soviet Union’s demise, and the fear that it has instilled in the CCP’s leadership features as a looming threat, with Xi Jinping banking on strengthening the party to avoid the same fate of its Soviet-Russian predecessor (see above). The move, surprising or otherwise, away from the informal institutions and rites of collective leadership and peaceful transfer of power espoused by Deng Xiaoping fits within this objective to ensure

stability during the period of reform and development under Xi Jinping (Torigian 2017; Fewsmith 2021b).

Before proceeding, it is important to briefly focus on the names and terms during this crisis. The ‘Coronavirus Disease 2019’ (COVID-19) is caused by a novel coronavirus. This ‘Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2’ (SARS-Cov-2), a zoonotic virus of which the origins remain unclear and therefore the cause of much controversy (Whittaker 2021; Sachs 2021). These designations follow the guidelines of the World Health Organisation (WHO 2019) for the naming of new infectious diseases by precluding, among other elements, references to specific geographical locations or cultural references. While these best practices are to be commended, they are only useful to the extent that the naming is not instrumentalised as part of a narrative that seeks to obscure the origins of such a disease and its spread (Glavin 2020). While the biological provenance of this novel coronavirus is yet to be clearly defined (Andersen, et al. 2020a), the Australian government early on took the lead in calling for an independent inquiry into this global pandemic (Scott 2020). With the epicentre of Wuhan being the first city where the virus was identified, it is of course an invalid argument to suggest that such an investigation ought not to focus on China (Bagshaw et al. 2020). Ironically, and perhaps a reflection of the country’s absence at the WHO and the UN, Taiwanese sources at times continue to employ the term ‘Wuhan novel pneumonia’ [武漢冠狀病毒] (Long; Yuan 2020).

Authors such as Ci Jiwei note that the enduring survival of the CCP may be more properly assessed in terms of the repressive state apparatus as led by the centre, which continues to function in the face of adversity (Ci 2019). As mentioned earlier, Ci’s description of the innate potential of crisis moments to cause “grave political problems [or] escalate into a full-blown legitimisation crisis, not least for posing an unprecedented challenge to regime continuation” (Ci 2019) provide a more appropriate frame of reference to understand the present pandemic

situation as it occurred in China. Given its nature as unrepresentative for the country, Ci's crisis tendencies are to be found in the responsiveness of the Chinese Party-state's handling of the COVID-19 crisis. Previous studies on crisis management in China, be it man-made or natural, demonstrate a shift from an initially more open period of rescue towards one of reconstruction and repression (Sorace 2017; 2016; V. C. Shih 2021). This reaffirmation of central state power is an application of the *fang-shou* cycle [放收周率], which describes the Party-state repressive nature as moving from periods of relative openness to an eventual closure (Baum 1994; Cho 2020; Shambaugh; Carson 2018; Brady 2017).

### **China's Early Handling of the Crisis: An Indicator of Success?**

Such a pattern could also be seen during the early pandemic situation in China, where fears of medical under-capacity were quickly placated by the construction of temporary *Fangcang* hospitals [方舱医院] in an extremely rapid fashion (Yi 2020; Chen et al. 2020). However, so too did the case of the citizen-journalist Chen Qiushi demonstrate the chaos of those early months. After reporting relatively freely on the situation in hospitals around Wuhan during the early stages of the outbreak, Chen would soon disappear, only reappearing in public view after around 600 days (Q. Chen 2020; Guo 2020). This shift towards increasingly stark repression on liberal reporting is evident also in the case of the early COVID-19 pandemic (Repnikova 2020; Kuo 2020a). It is here also noteworthy to trace the similarity with the methods employed to counter the SARS pandemic in 2003 (Fewsmith 2003; P. M. Thornton 2009; Waldron 2003). The transforming of a crisis into an opportunity is a direct consequence of the aforementioned period of reaffirming central control following a crisis. In so doing, the crisis itself (and any emergency thereafter) can become a "mode of governance" itself through its ability to "circumvent [an] otherwise fragmented political and bureaucratic [policy process]" as well as

to mobilise societal forces to halt the spread of the virus (P. M. Thornton 2009). With hindsight, such a process can be said to have unfolded over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic in China from December-January of 2020 until, as of writing, October 2021.

However, such an altogether victorious narrative – eagerly presented as veritable by the Party-state itself – ignores the early months of the pandemic during which, it can be said, the progressive Party-state that is socialist China, experienced an effective standstill. That is not to say that other countries around the world did not find themselves ill-prepared, perhaps more than China, to take control of the virus’ spread, it is an interesting and important perspective to consider. Neither is it here the intention to suggest that events like the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate that China’s governance institutions suffer from either “a hidden crisis of governance nor curiously adept at” reforming themselves amid such a crisis (P. M. Thornton 2009) Illustrative to what is here called the standstill during the early handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is the simultaneous absence of Xi Jinping (Kuo 2020b; Dotson 2020), China’s foremost leader, during those few months as well as the requested delay by China to the World Health Organisation (WHO) of a global report on the virus situation in the country.

Studies on the domestic decision-making process in China accentuate both the effective-if-bureaucratic practices (Swaine 2020), the national-provincial-local level feedback (Renninger 2020), its presence in multinational institutions (Tylecote; Clark 2020) as well as the impact on the health care institutions (Xing; Zhang 2021) that it brings about. Other reports (Report 2020; Hudson Institute n.d.) look at the pandemic situation as it unfolded through the early months, clearly mapping out the major events that occurred during those months in the period 2019-2020. In terms of that early pandemic situation, a critical period that emerges is from January 3 to January 20, 2020; indeed, starting from the first declaration of a virus situation by Xi Jinping and including a crucial six-day delayed deference to the WHO between

January 14 to the beginning of total mobilisation against the virus on January 20, 2020 (AP 2020). A slight modification on this period of time is suggested by Victor C. Shih who puts forward the annual travel for Lunar New Year between January 7 to January 23, 2020 (V. C. Shih 2021, 71). Afterwards, it took another two months, at the beginning of March that same year, before Xi Jinping visited the city of Wuhan in a very visible visit to the virus' epicentre (Dyer 2020; Kuo 2020c) It is that initial period, aptly marked but not limited to the Chairman's absence from the domestic political stage at the time that is of interest here. There ought to be no surprise that this approach goes against the triumphant narrative published in the white paper *Fighting COVID-19: China Action* [抗击新冠肺炎疫情的中国行动白皮书] late June 2020.

Published by China's State Council Information Office (SCIO 2020), this authoritative document demonstrates that, according to an article in the People's Daily shortly after, "through the timeline of China's fight against the epidemic, we can clearly see the enlightened leadership and scientific decision-making of the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core (Bandurski 2020). It suggests that the COVID-19 crisis, particularly in its early stages and outside of its yet present reality, emerged as a sort of organising principle for the Party-state to demonstrate its abilities. Bringing together a wide variety of earlier forces, as well as providing the necessary 'time and space' for that Party-state to get its domestic affairs in order. In so doing, there is a visible application of the earlier debate on China's rise (and its guaranteed victory) that here serves, even amid deadly uncertainty, as an indicator of success. By contrast, this chapter demonstrates that the early standstill, illustrated by the simultaneous absence of Xi Jinping, questions that prevalent image of the Chinese leadership as possessing a long-term perspective on strategy.

In terms of China's rise, however, it seems that the present crisis only served to further strengthen a debate that was already leaning towards inevitability (van Middelaar; van der

Putten 2020). Nowhere is this demonstrated more visibly than in the aforementioned slogans that the formula for success during a crisis lays with the further strengthening of central party leadership. However, that same effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 may very well be read as an attempt to prevent any sort of cracks in the façade of order and stability (Lai 2020; Economy 2021).

## **2. COVID-19: Moral Adversary or Moral Hazard?**

While in the global fight to contain the spread and the virality of the virus, scrutinising the CCP's initial response may be put away as a “dangerous distraction” (Dibble 2020; O'Neill 2020), in the long term these are questions that ought to be asked. The soft rejection of such an approach, based largely on concerns on the anti-Asian racism that it may spark (Hung 2020), however, is detrimental for the debate on the spread of the virus, the relationship with China, and China's rise itself. The denial of any responsibility on the part of the Chinese Party-state to instead praise the Chinese response to the outbreak furthermore speaks to a fallacy that a pandemic such as the present one was bound to happen either way; thereby ignoring the point of origins and its subsequent handling by that particular state. Of course, any critique on China's handling of the initial stages of the crisis does not suggest that governments failings in the liberal democracies of the West do not exist, yet it is for the scholars of those respective polities to do their respective service. At the same time, the argument that China “bought time” for the West to prepare its own response does not hold up to scrutiny (I. Johnson 2020). Indeed, a state that is itself dumbfounded by the outbreak cannot at the same time be presented as the saviour.

### **The Lab Leak Hypothesis**

Nevertheless, it is also true that a related assumption that China deliberately (and maliciously?) unleashed the virus is onto the world is questionable but also irrelevant for the purposes of this

chapter. Instead, to understand the (geo)political consequences of COVID-19, it is important to study the initial cover-up as part of the Chinese state's autocratic nature. Such an investigation serves as an important corrective to those predictions of a new and imminent world order on a Chinese foundation, to instead question the validity of China's handling of the crisis as being an extension of its political system, that is socialism with Chinese characteristics. The argument that China solved its initial hesitance with wide-ranging measures similarly does not hold up. In this regard, one interesting article argued that the US' botched response to the COVID-19 outbreak could present a 'Suez Moment' for the American hegemony, analogous with the crisis that fundamentally altered the reach of the British Empire after 1956 (Campbell, Kurt M.; Doshi 2020). It being too early to make any conclusive statements on systemic changes in the current world order, this chapter reflects on the further trajectory of China's rise and the implications of the Chinese Party-state's autocratic regime for the world, against the backdrop of the current crisis.

An even more revealing analogy, not in the least for its similarity in setting, points to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986. It is a similarity invoked relatively swiftly following the outbreak of COVID-19 (C. Zhang 2020; Bièvre, et al. 2020; Levett 2020). One open letter, for example, describes an initial cover-up (or, in any event, a reluctance to be open) as a "self-inflicted wound" (Fulda 2020). It is of course true that this is not a proper historical analogy since Chernobyl and the recent COVID-19 outbreak are entirely different matters; the one nuclear, the other biological. Nevertheless, the concept, in essence, describes the high costs of covering up an accident, whether it be man-made or not. It is a question inspired by the initial reluctance from the Chinese side to inform the WHO authorities in a timely manner, as well as kept alive by the failure of the WHO expert team whose access to material and related

information within China remained unable to satisfy these most staunch of critiques of the early handling of the pandemic situation.

In this regard, academic and political commentators are discussing the future in terms of holding China to account (Downer 2020) and going as far as calling for interstate ties with China to be reconsidered (Payne, Sebastian; Warrell, Helen; Hughes 2020). Not only does this fit within the current debate surrounding the end of Western engagement of China in favour of rather more isolating measures (A. I. Johnston 2019); this sort of moral turpitude on the part of China similarly fits within what Henry Kissinger called the potential risk of China becoming a “morally flawed inevitable adversary” to the West (2001, 134). Such a development would present a further escalation in a US-China relationship that is increasingly talked about in terms of a new Cold War (Shiffrinson 2019; Kania 2018). In this context, predictions of China now all but creating the next world order fall flat. Instead, it is more interesting to question the rise of China itself, with the outbreak of COVID-19 exposing a system that might be frailer than it looks. In this regard, the importance of making the distinction between China and the CCP comes into play when talking about the COVID-19 crisis in terms of an evil empire (a moral adversary) or of a CCP that covered up its own mistakes (K. Lin 2020).

Mistrust and suspicion led to calls for an inquiry into its initial conduct brings into the open that question of a cover-up and, if such manipulation did take place, the extent to which it exacerbated the situation both in the country and internationally (Bollyky; Fidler 2020; Smyth 2020). As such, China’s tough yet effective measures to contain and halt the spread of the virus; as much as the potential cover-up that happened during its initial handling of the situation, are both expressions of China’s authoritarian model of governance (Hendriks 2020). An international inquiry, then, does not politicise the issue since it already is (BMJ 2020; R. Zhang 2021). To pose this argument in terms of the supposed Cold War that is brewing between the



ideological systems of the liberal West and socialist China, and the supremacy that the Chinese handling of COVID-19 is supposed to demonstrate, largely ignores the reforms of the governance institutions that is currently underway in China. Yet rather than the pandemic presenting an ideological battle that is all but won by China, such a development would effectively expose a Chinese Party-state that is emphasising stability during its pursuit of reform and development under Xi Jinping. In this regard, stability is not some abstract, reverse the notion of chaos as it is generally understood; nor does it refer to the presumed collectivist mind (Confucian or indeed socialist) of the Chinese psyche as the argument seems to go during this outbreak (Mahbubani 2020).

Such approaches are of course easily critiqued in terms of Orientalism and the search for an exotic “Other” that is to serve as the scapegoat (Hudson 2020). Such rhetoric of a clash of civilisations is a perversion of the debate as it presents a dyadic reading of the world in terms of good and evil. Rather, this chapter argues that the COVID-19 pandemic features as an interesting backdrop to the ideological competition between the political systems of the West and China, as predictions of a new Cold War increasingly argue. In this regard, the idea of China as the new evil empire argues that much like the Soviet Union supposedly before it, intends on taking over a world reeling from a crisis of capitalism. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps the first time that the implications of China’s rise are felt quite literally across every home in all the world. The moral hazard, then, is much more a crisis of the Chinese socialist system. The Chinese Party-state’s muted response to the outbreak and Western complacency to these “misrepresentations of reality” are particularly worrisome (Waldron 2003). It is unclear, for example, whether the true origins of the current pandemic are to be found in a natural environment or an artificial setting; or whether a slow, negligent response to the initial outbreak sits at its basis of its global spread.

## **The WHO Determining COVID-19's Proximal Origins**

When faced with pandemics, it is generally assumed that the place where a virus outbreak is first detected does not necessarily order its place of origins. Indeed, a virus as potent as COVID-19 may be already spreading well prior to its detection. For this reason, it follows that the WHO's best practices generally preclude any stigmatising reference when naming viruses and their related diseases (see earlier). Where a virus is detected, however, grants a foothold for investigating the virus' spread, its composition, as well as the symptoms that are being displayed by those infected. Doing so allows the WHO "to enhance understanding of the outbreak [and] the nature and impact of ongoing containment measures; to share knowledge on the COVID-19 response and preparedness measures being implemented [...]; to generate recommendations for adjusting COVID-19 containment and response measures [...]; to establish priorities for a collaborative programme for work, research and development to address critical gaps in knowledge and response and readiness tools and activities" (WHO 2021, 10). The WHO's fact-finding mission of 14 January to 10 February 2021 was thus conceived in this spirit.

While early uncertainty concerning the virus' origins, its predicted symptoms, as well as its spread did inform the WHO's decision to delay the announcement of a global pandemic until 11 March 2020 (WHO 2020; Clift 2020). However, so too did government messaging by the Chinese Party-state, who remained remarkably mum and strikingly repressive on information on the cases of an unidentified pneumonia (see earlier). The subsequent WHO field visit to China's Wuhan, a saga riddled with noticeable flaws, led some even to call it a "Potemkin tour" (Sheridan 2021; Sky 2021). Nevertheless, in its first phase investigation, the international WHO team tested various hypotheses on the virus' pathways of emergence (WHO 2021: 111–20). Weighing possible zoological origins (either through direct contact, an

intermediary host, or via a cold-chain link) against the lab leak (incidental or actual), the WHO's report finds direct zoonotic transmission "possible-to-likely," through an intermediary host "likely to very likely," via a cold/food chain "possible," and a laboratory incident "extremely unlikely" (WHO 2021, 8–9). As the findings of this report suggest, it may be considered unlikely that the virus leaked from a laboratory and ought therefore to be considered of zoonotic origins. Since then, however, the continuing debate in news media and the popular press led to a number of logically flawed notions on the origins of SARS-CoV-2. One recent study for example refers to the cold chain origins as the "popsicle hypothesis" (Chan; Ridley 2021) in an ironic nod to the commonly accepted proximal origins one (see Andersen et al. 2020b).

It can be accepted that the WHO's mission did not concern itself with the role of Chinese politics during the early pandemic situation. However, it is not so that continuing uncertainty regarding the virus' origins necessarily means that the origins are to be found in the as of yet unexamined hypothesis of a lab leak. Neither does it mean that Chinese politics are to be left unscrutinised. As is usually the case, the truth will be somewhere in the middle. This chapter is, however, not concerned with determining the origins of COVID-19 but with exactly what role was played by official China and where the narrative of success ought to be positioned in the debate on China's rise.

While the WHO's mission was a scientific one, its international nature of its investigation into the early pandemic situation in China made it highly politicised, not in the least by the Chinese Party-state itself. That even such a globally mandated exercise is thus constrained ought to be revealing for the state of research openness in China today. However, China's actions and concerns towards the WHO's mission also disproves to a large extent the non-accidental lab leak hypothesis, thereby understating the zoonotic proximal origins one to be, indeed, far more likely. Further evidence for this argument, as explored in this chapter, can

also be perceived through the initial hesitancy displayed by the Chinese Party-state at the start of the outbreak in Wuhan (Farrell 2020): going from the suppression of information on the early cases of pneumonia to complete mobilisation of society in a veritable people's war (Gallelli 2020; Xinhua 2020b). The COVID-19 pandemic thus presents the study of China's rise with an interesting case which allows for a testing of the earlier held beliefs concerning this phenomenon in a modified form with a new and unforeseen circumstance. If China's rise, and particularly its assumed success, will bring about a new world order, it can be argued that China's success in COVID-19 and failure elsewhere may, in itself, be illustrative for the debate on China's rise itself.

### **3. COVID-19 Accelerating Existing Debates**

To understand the post-COVID-19 world (Chestnut Greitens 2020), determining whether the global pandemic accelerated existing trends in favour of China's rise (Mitter 2020) or, indeed, presented a fundamental juncture (D. Green 2020) for such a trend, is fundamental. Thus, this chapter contributes to the attempts to interrogate the overall weight that can be attributed to the COVID-19 crisis as a determinant variable in the debate on China's rise. More generally, this specific debate deals with the question of world politics and the shift in global leadership (Reich; Dombrowski 2020; Heisbourg 2020). In essence, the debate on China's rise is its most recent iteration. The reverse may also very well be true, where the global pandemic has little to no impact on the overall state of affairs in the world (Drezner 2020). In terms of this thesis, the question ought to be asked whether the COVID-19 crisis will determine China's (presumably inevitable) rise, hinder it, or have no impact (Magnus 2020). The answer is to be found in the study of the responsiveness of governance institutions on the national (V. C. Shih 2021; C. et al Wu, n.d.; Renninger 2020; Lipsky 2020; He et al. 2020) as well as on the international level

(Davies; Wenham 2020; Zhou 2021; Sell 2020; Sparke; William 2021; Kilby; McWhirter 2021; Norrlöf 2020).

## **China in the World during and after COVID-19**

Ci Jiwei's timeline of failure by 2029 suggests a relatively more concrete date than the more general temporal visions of either victory or collapse embedded within *Sinophrenic* vision on China's rise (see earlier), it remains rather elusive and therefore ought not to discourage a more contemporary view on the topic. Nevertheless, this framework provides an opportunity to discuss the influence of crisis moments on what is otherwise an almost unshakable teleology of success. How do contingencies, then, change the calculus of the Chinese Party-state; and do they have an impact on China's ability to fulfill these goals in the future? More so than the Great Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 (Womack 2017), these questions are presently asked ever more frequently with regards to the COVID-19 crisis. The associated predictions make for a novel application of the debate on China's rise, two debates running parallel to each other (Leoni 2020).

In the context of this thesis, it is interesting to interrogate whether the COVID-19 crisis presents a "critical juncture [or a] transformational effect" for China's rise, either through a "discontinuous" shock (Drezner 2020, E21; D. Green 2020) or an "acceleration of pre-existing trends" (Drezner 2020, E21; McCormick 2020). One possible approach that such a shift could be investigated, is to measure the distribution of power during (Jaworsky, Bernadette Nadya; Qiaoan 2020) but especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Drezner 2020) and the power transition in global leadership that would be its result (Ameyaw-Brobbe 2021).

Internationally, the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), a think tank under China's Ministry of State Security, argues, the post-COVID-19 world may be significantly more hostile towards the country akin to the period that followed the crackdown

on Tiananmen Square of 1989 (Reuters 2020; CICIR 2020). The treatment by the Chinese authorities of the initial outbreak in Wuhan is already reflected in the changing nature of the relationship between the PRC and Western governments. More generally, this problematic situation speaks to the moral hazard for global health that is present in the current relationship with China. Because of the great successes derived from the repressive implementation of measures against the spread of the virus, a great reversal took place on the global stage where China emerged as largely successful. This inversion, particularly in showcasing the strengths of the Chinese authoritarian model of government (see earlier) in tackling the pandemic of course stands in stark contrast with enduring failures in countries traditionally seen as part of a failing neoliberal camp (Norrlöf 2020; Condon 2020; Sparke, Matthew; William 2021).

Such a binary reality of crisis narratives pits a successful China versus faltering neoliberal ideology largely defined. It is thus no wonder that the COVID-19 crisis became an iteration of China's rise itself. Indeed, a false question could read: if China is so successful in halting the spread of the pandemic, why would these neoliberal states not adopt a few of those measures of their own? In so doing, it may be possible to see a move towards the end, eventually, accepting the Chinese model itself as the new indicator of world leadership. It is a side thought that illustrates the "myth of authoritarian superiority" (Huang 2021; Hendriks 2020). Similarly, the adoption of Chinese-style measures is not only impossible because of the different political construction of states elsewhere, as well as the oftentimes ironic fears of a creeping totalitarianism. Admittedly, measures imposed over the course of the COVID-19 situation, with some more successful than others, but always divisive to the core of the social fabric stand in stark contrast with the notion of China's linear successful model. That comparison falls flat, of course, when comparing the ideological differences with the PRC, as well as the systemic features that may have contributed to the pandemic in the first place. Such a false equivalence

does, of course, little to demonstrate a victory for China since it compares repressive measures to the actual efficacy as well desirability of policies. However, the image of a successful China is a persistent one, particularly for the Chinese leadership itself.

### **Chinese Politics during COVID-19**

Studying the political effect of the pandemic in China, or indeed the position of COVID-19 in Chinese politics, presents a mode of governance in which the “logic of permanent security,” or the “striving of states [...] to make themselves invulnerable to threats. [It] is the unobtainable goal of absolute safety that necessarily results in civilian casualties by its paranoid tendency to indiscriminate violence” (Moses 2021, 1). The logic of securing the state during a pandemic is of course one of its traditional applications. However, this chapter is not concerned with exploring the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on Chinese politics via the field of securitisation (Kirk; McDonald 2021; Liu; Bennett 2020) Instead, to consider how the COVID-19 crisis and its effects on the prerogative of securitisation works through in the sphere of Chinese (high) politics. Following an initial standstill at the beginning of the pandemic, a great reversion occurred where China not only lauded its victory in the fight against the virus but also was able to push forward policies in other, unrelated areas.

Interpreting China’s pandemic politics, some authors perceive a degree of urgency (Blanchette 2021b), where others perceive a further strengthening of power as a sign of insecurity (Baranovitch 2021; Pei 2020). Derived from the field of genocide studies, it is particularly with regards to the search for full and complete security that is applicable to the interpretation of the Chinese Party-state stance to the COVID-19 pandemic (Lipsy 2020; He et al. 2020). Earlier sources already apply a similar concept in terms of ideological security (Blanchette 2020; 2021a; M. D. Johnson 2020), but also the motivations behind such a move for a Party-state so preoccupied with stability and, thus again, security (Khan 2018; Schmidt-

Glantz 2009). Yet beyond securitisation, there is another interesting dimension to the COVID-19 worthy of discussion. Students of Chinese politics may be less surprised by the swift finalising of two defining policies of the period under Xi Jinping. Determined a priori to culminate and coincide with the CCP's centenary in 2021, the campaign against extreme poverty and even more so the building of a moderately well-off, or *xiaokang* society (Boer 2021; Z. Cui 2003) occurred over the course of COVID-19 in China.

The delivery of this preordained policy in this way makes for an interesting analysis of CCP's "aspirational socialism" (J. Brown 2021, 690–94), or the importance of delivering on promises lest prophecy fails; and thus, moving from aspiration to reality. Completing such huge political programmes with their wide-ranging socio-economic impact according to plan or, in this context, on time [如期] and as predicted [预期] of course presents a more gradual path than the more critical notion of *shturmovshchina*, a Soviet-era concept describing an "end-of-plan rush," a "sporadic rushing to achieve goals by enthusiastic assault" (Bowie 2019; Nove 1991, 576). This sidenote brings forward a more nuanced reading of the widely misunderstood but generally accepted of long-term thinking on the part of China, confusing temporary campaigning for clairvoyance and not accounting for any of its shortcomings.

The refusal to admit faults made in the early pandemic situation (whether accidental or due to negligence) by the CCP, if any, ought to be understood in this regard. In this way, the building of *xiaokang* socialism in China is the first step in bringing about a revolutionary change in Chinese society, at least set out by the policies of Xi Jinping. The stringent reach of this thesis does not allow for a further exploration of this argument, yet it ought to be clear that a rethinking of the debate on China's rise will focus on this aspirational socialism. In this regard, the COVID-19 crisis and its lockdowns provide a welcome opportunity, at least for China's rise, to proceed uninterrupted by the annoyances of the outside world. Interpreting China's rise from



the perspective of the coronavirus pandemic, however, presents an even more sterile version of a debate that repeats many of the traditional flaws identified earlier. It is interesting to note the influence of an altogether negative event as the COVID-19 crisis as potentially providing evidence for an unresolved debate as China's rise (or its fall). As noted earlier, both sides of this debate see themselves affirmed at various points; perhaps even more working through in official statements that seeks to conjure opportunity out of crisis.

## 4. Conclusion

The acceleration in China's rise that is attributed to the COVID-19 may, then, be interpreted not so much as settling the debate, but as a product of the temporal considerations that run through Chinese politics. The reaching of *xiaokang* socialism is here of the utmost importance since as it teleologically coincides with the hundredth anniversary of the CCP, its first centennial goal to realise China's great rejuvenation. It is clear that China's rise, at least in the eyes of official China proceeds uninterrupted and perhaps even strengthened by its at least initial successes in combatting the pandemic. Similarly, it is but little surprise that that Xi Jinping's speech celebrating the CCP's centenary does not even mention the pandemic situation. The striking contrast between this teleological determinism and the more short-term and rapid action required during the early pandemic situation gives further credence to the argument that the COVID-19 crisis itself is revealing for the urgency that is embedded within the aspirational socialist state to complete its objectives while also moving away from the unsustainable path of high-speed economic growth (Holbig 2020; Bowie 2019).

This chapter discussed how the COVID-19 crisis fits within the wider debate on China's rise and how it showcases, because of its own internal logic, the logical fallacy of *Sinophrenia* (see Orlik 2020,). Illustrated by Xi Jinping's absence during the early pandemic situation and his prominence after its presumed victory on the home front also came with a complete absence

from the international stage. From a leader avoiding blame to one that is firmly taking up the reins, there is an inherent tendency to interpret disasters in China as either forecasting the coming collapse of the Party-state or its successful survival. These analyses follow a traditional trope of the Mandate of Heaven [天命] in which natural disasters are perceived as indicative of the sentiment, whether divine or secular, that the leader is no longer desired to be in power. It continues to be rather strange that in the Chinese context such cultural tropes can be elevated to the position of a rational explanation of the contemporary Party-state (Jiang, T.H.; O'Dwyer 2019). Indeed, a recurrence of the proverbial sins of Egypt as a metaphysical manifestation takes away from the perspective of political misconduct leading to a global outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Medical commentators have aptly noted that a pandemic such as presented by COVID-19 was bound to happen, nor will it be the last time that the world will be confronted with a disease of this magnitude. At the same time, such assertions ought not to detract from studying China's handling of the initial outbreak. In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic is indicative of China's rise, or at least how outside observers can interpret this phenomenon. In this regard, the global fight against COVID-19 is here presented not so much in terms of the different political systems between the liberal-democratic West and socialist China; but instead in terms of how well the latter is able to handle and stem the outbreak. Somewhat counterfactually, the enduring nature of the ideological competition between liberalism and (Chinese?) socialism here increasingly takes on the opposite of what the *End of History* (Fukuyama 2006) famously argued. More broadly, this argument presents a "strategic contest" that is not fought between divergent political systems, but by their respective ability to "[implement] social reforms" (X. Yan 2019a; 2019b). Instead of presenting a Chinese Party-state that is "well positioned to take a giant leap in political prestige" (Womack 2017) as much as it was with the GFC, then, the

COVID-19 crisis is galvanising existing debates on the question of a new world order and China's rise itself (the latter potentially being an extension of the former).

Rather than finalising the abstract notion of a Chinese world order, then, the outbreak exposed the global risks for the world that are inherent to China's autocratic regime. While it is certainly so that racial slurs aimed at people of Chinese descent are deplorable, the same cannot be said of those criticisms against the CCP. Presenting itself as the saviour of the Chinese nation and the Chinese population, it is of course the Chinese Party-state that would like to see the two conflated as an attack on the latter could be presented as an assault on the former. It is exactly the task of the commentator to demonstrate her ability to separate the two, thereby showcasing that criticising the illiberal Party-state that is the CCP does not mean that the commentator is making any value statements of the Chinese people writ large.

The political journalist Lee Yee concluded an article on the coronavirus outbreak with the sentence: "lies and the covering up of facts without asking for the truth are things that are most incompatible with the human existence" (Y. Lee 2020). This reference to Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic idiom of "seeking truth from facts" [实事求是] in political and economic reform serves as an excellent illustration to the point that this chapter makes. Another author, Minxin Pei, made a similar point building on previous analyses of the lessons of the Soviet Union's demise for China's further rise. Here, Pei identifies the setting in of rigidity as a coming upheaval of the political state (2020). Recent discussions of this 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress from 2017, noted for its notably dramatic departure from previous such congresses, can be characterised as giving greater weight to the CCP's "pursuit of modernity, power, and international status" (Tobin 2020), or what Hong Kong University's Ci Jiwei calls the party's "communist revolutionary legacy" (Ci 2019; see above). While such assertions are important to understand

China's rise more from a domestic political-ideological perspective, it ultimately risks buying into the party's preordained path that it is charting between 1949 and 2049.

It is important to note this potential problem, as the debate on the rise of China already suffers from treating that development as a given (Hagström; Jerdén 2014). Indeed, while a welcome change from those studies that see an imminent collapse of the CCP in China, urging for this revolutionary trajectory to stand at the forefront of analysis rather than those “contingencies upon [the party's] performance” (Ci 2019, 73) ultimately risks ignoring the latter. Interestingly, this perspective on China's rise points to the fact that an economic slowdown need not spell out the end of the CCP's China but rather that its rise might be more constrained in time than often thought (see earlier).

Even if the lab theory is proven to be true, in whatever capacity that may be, this chapter demonstrates that it would not mean that China is an evil power that spread the virus on strategic grounds. If anything, it would render further proof to the argument that COVID-19 outbreak presents a Chernobyl Moment for the PRC as much as the nuclear accident meant for the USSR. The real moral hazard, however, sits with the political system that covered up the outbreak of this virus, whether it be man-made or a naturally developed cluster. To conclude, it may indeed be argued that: “If the global balance of power between despots and democrats does change in the aftermath of the crisis, it will be not because the pandemic favours the former, but because the latter has messed things up” (Stephens 2021).

# Conclusion:

## Rejecting the Outcome-Driven Approach to China's Rise

CHINA'S RISE IS the story of a grand historical ascent. Despite the popular understanding of this nation's rise to power, this thesis finds that the success of China's rise does not solely depend on ensuring continued economic growth but, even more so, on the revival of the CCP's ideological-revolutionary legitimacy. It is the lifeline of the revolutionary party, even in its established position of government. This assertion goes back to the dual nature of the CCP as both a governing party, and a revolutionary party. Its ambition: to bring about the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This revolutionary-ideological objective is socialist to such a degree that it presents a future vision of an egalitarian society, yet it is nationalist in its essentialised framing of those belonging to that future. By positioning itself as the indispensable part between state and nation (as a collective of people), the party presents a populist rendering of its main objective, that of self-perpetuating central party rule. This perfection of the party's dictatorship is aided not in the least by the coercive element of modern technology (Ringen 2016; Teng 2020). Inevitability is here a false yet highly convincing notion, since the CCP is presented as the one and only choice for China's future.

The great-power bias that runs through the debate on China's rise is singularly focused on the reaching of that eponymous status by the rising power. In an extended version, it also

expects war to erupt at the conjunctural moment (Sorace 2020, 205) where the authoritarian rising power will take over from the liberal democratic one. Seen in this light, the rise and fall of great powers are cast in the dynamic between the enthusiastic rising power and the ruling yet declining hegemon. The rise and fall literature, which often interprets historical transfers of power in this way, is of but little value to perceive contemporary, ongoing, and therefore undecided rises in power. Similarly, it is often not the case that a rising power seeks global hegemony, instead demonstrating a preference towards retaining the existing status quo, while growing in regional influence (Johnston 2018).

For this reason, it is not enough to simply substitute Sparta and Athens, respectively, with Germany and the UK (Brunnermeier et al. 2018), the US and the UK (Schake 2017), or, at present, China and the USA (Allison 2017a). Nor do these historical examples make clear why and when a war would break out. Would it be instigated by the hegemonic power to prevent its rising rival from succeeding? Or would it, rather, be the rising power that seeks to fulfil its rise by forging it in the blaze of war? In any event, it is suggested that war occurs at the convergence of the pathways of the rise and decline of two global rivals. The difficulty of interpreting such an event is further exacerbated by the flawed framework of using GDP growth as proof for a sustained rise to power. More interesting, as explored in this thesis, is exactly how the political organisation behind China's rise pursues this development, and how it is present in the ideological pronouncements on this trajectory.

To move beyond this problem, this thesis addresses the ideological-revolutionary narrative of inevitability in the debate with a focus on China's contemporary rise. Building on a critical reflection on the temporal understanding (the "when") of this process of ascendancy by one of the world's foremost nations, the thesis provides a theoretical framework with which it is possible to interpret the other parameters more clearly (the "what," "why," and "how").

This concluding chapter first expands on the findings of this thesis before turning the focus on the idea of China's great rejuvenation. It is the main objective of China's rise as officially, and commonly, understood within the Chinese leadership and society itself. China's rise, or the trajectory of this socialist rising power more generally, is, thus, predominantly a domestic undertaking that manifests itself in the global domain. Indeed, its success cannot merely be measured by US decline but must speak to the CCP's navigating of basic problems in its construction of the party-state as well as the successful creation of what it calls the Chinese people's community [中华民族共同体]. This idea of common prosperity [共同富裕] (Xi 2022b; P. Gao 2022), as reserved to those belonging to the Chinese *Volk* is interesting, for it suggests a new understanding of economic growth that will be, at least in its aspirations, much more egalitarian in nature.

## **1. Confronting Basic Problems from Aspiration to Actuality**

The return to the basic notion of the CCP's legitimacy as drawing on its historical mission of delivering the Chinese nation from poverty and imperialism, as captured in the slogan [不忘初心牢记使命] (see above) is, however, not a return to the period of High Maoism. During that time, the party's political leadership was strengthened via support for permanent revolution from below (at the behest of the state). Xi, presently, is attempting the opposite through *Gleichschaltung* from above. A *Partification*, if you will. Any similarity with a Maoist cult of personality as such can be attributed to the working through of the party-state dilemma, itself a product of a successful revolution solved by the institutionalisation of any process of representation. The dilemma is clear in leadership-centric explanations of PRC history, which trace China's rise from Mao Zedong, over Deng Xiaoping, to Xi Jinping; or as the official historiography illustrates it: a rise from standing up, to becoming rich, and, finally, getting

strong. Commentators often omit the period under Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao as justified by the notion of transitional and transformational leaders, the latter holding a greater impact on the course of Chinese politics and policymaking.

### **China's Rise and the Political Leadership**

Notwithstanding this thesis' lesser emphasis on Jiang and Hu's leadership, these periods of political rule are important variables as they served as evidence for the process of peaceful transfers of power, supposedly institutionalised in the CCP after 1992 or at least until 2012. As recent research now suggests, such an approach is more fantastical than real given the enduring Leninist tendencies in the CCP (Fewsmith 2021). While overseeing the crucial years of China's economic rise in that same period, the lasting influence of Jiang Zemin into the administration of Hu Jintao, as well as the relatively unsuccessful tenure of collective leadership in the Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao administration, revealed the persistence of governance deficiencies associated with the party-state dilemma here described.

Keeping these insights in mind, what then explains the continuing focus on the strong leader both as a token of Chinese politics as well as in studies of this topic? Rather than a historical-cultural disposition of the Chinese people to genuflect to power, this thesis suggests that the central position of the Chairman of the CCP, and his power, is a direct consequence of the inherent weakness of the party since Mao Zedong. More specifically, the party-state dilemma is a basic problem of perpetuating central party rule that is only masked by the presence of a strong leader, whose claim to ideological-revolutionary heritage is, for the time being, justifying CCP rule. Previous research, fortunately, rejects idiosyncratic explanations for party-states led by strongmen and *Carlylian* notions of history furthered by the actions of great men. Party survival, as opposed to the obsolescence of that organisation, stands here at the core of this question. The idea of the charismatic leader as a (temporary) solution to the lack of



institutional-legal legitimacy is already present in the classic works of Max Weber. Describing a process of deification, for example, the political leader is described as not inherently powerful but whose authority is socially constructed to ensure political strength and survival (see Joosse, 2014).

The party-state dilemma can, then, also be understood as a question of age or power; China's rise as one of inevitability or coincidence. Where the strong leader embodies the rule of the revolutionary party, so too does he present that basic problem of continued rule. In the case of Xi Jinping, for example, the lack of a named successor is a striking example because it fundamentally puts political succession in a light of high uncertainty. Any return to Maoist policies, as a result, is only so in terms of confronting the same old dilemma of the party's original aspiration and historical mission, now with a different solution of attempting to consolidate central party rule. In this regard, it is a false dilemma to ask whether China is a socialist or a capitalist country. As this thesis demonstrated, (party-)state capitalism, as understood in the wide literature on the topic, can lead directly to party obsolescence as it does not underscore the CCP's ideological-revolutionary mandate (Pearson et al. 2021; see also Pei, 2016).

At the same time, reinvigorating the party's aspiration and mission through loyalty rather than purity (Doyon 2021) shows that a party-based solution to the party-state dilemma is not always wise in terms of (good) governance. Such approaches to the tension between party and states in regimes such as China's, either from the state (bureaucratisation, institutionalisation) or the market (state capitalism) perspective, always lead to obsolescence for the party itself. It furthermore points to the dichotomy between politics and the institutionalisation of the state. Where the party interferes in the affairs of the state, especially when run as a corporation (Brown, 2016; Wu, 2016; see also Li, 2022), it may lead to the

understanding that the political party's ideological-revolutionary nature is essentially dead. Doing so ignores a basic truth of the party-state system in China, as run by the CCP.

This thesis understands the current trajectory of China's rise, embodied by the CCP's Party-state, as moving from aspiration to actuality. This framework is also captured more recently in the concept of aspirational socialism (J. Brown 2021). It does so by a positive, if critical understanding of the party's own historical materialism, which foresees an almost inevitable success for China's rise despite a simultaneous recognition of the obstacles and challenges along the way. Aspirational socialism, however, also holds within itself potentially adverse consequences when such objectives and expectations are delayed or otherwise not met. Such a negative understanding of China's rise, actively resisted through campaigns against historical nihilism is here not considered. It nevertheless points to a sort of sinister dynamism that is already present in China's contemporary rise. Notwithstanding the similar appreciation of potential success or failure, this thesis rejects notions of imminent collapse or inevitable success as captured in the concept of *Sinophrenia* (Orlik 2020). It also finds invalid the question of whether China has risen or if it still rising (Breslin 2017). These two examples illustrate the importance of a theoretical framework as it is here presented.

In brief, China's rise may be considered as a pursuit of happiness, combined with a fear for freedom (Schmidt-Glintzer 2009, 24). This understanding explains the enduring leading position of the CCP within Chinese politics while attesting to its altruistic objectives and its methods of terror. However, the story does not end there. To get to the core of China's rise, one ought to understand the historical materialism behind China's official interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, which reveals such a Marxist interpretation of history as a modernisation effort led by the party-state. In the eyes of the CCP, then, China's rise remains an unfinished revolution. It is not a cosmological phenomenon that is sure to arise but a product of CCP

ideology, nurtured by the dialectics of its historical outlook. Once China's rise is understood as such a dialectic process and therefore a development that is always correct, it allows for a critical analysis of the CCP's own position within this rising trajectory and the implications it holds for the understanding of the party's history, present, and future. While it is so that China's rise is the story of a nation aspiring to become a great power in economic and military terms, the associated markers of identity and status may not be ignored. Moreover, it can be assumed that this process is as of yet unfolding: China is still on the rise, rather than risen (see above).

The concept of China's rise is a useful frame of reference via which to study the Chinese modernisation drive. Caution ought to be practiced, however, in taking the longevity of the party-state or the CCP as evidence for the inevitable success of this ambition to rise to power. As a dogmatic truth, indeed, the party is keen to observe that it has always been and, therefore, shall remain. The triumphant slogan "long, long live" [万万岁], denoting a time period of at least ten thousand times 10.000 years may here be taken quite literally. Such a perspective employs a post-1949 on the years of struggle after 1927-1928. Those formative years of the CCP as a revolutionary party guided by the twin tenets of Marxism-Leninism figure as the founding myth of the party-state that rules to the present day. As explained in this thesis, the failure to differentiate between the PRC (at 70 in 2019) and the CCP (hundred years of age in 2021) makes it so that the party is not often considered as the sole agent in discussions on China's rise.

In the context of China's rise to great-power status, the lack of a theory or, in any event, an interpretative framework often leads to interpretation characterised by (post-)Cold War sentiments. The field of Soviet Studies, in particular, is here simultaneously rejected to the detriment of the study of contemporary socialist regimes that, despite popular conclusion, did survive the fall of the Soviet Union in Russia and Europe. Strikingly, a wide variety of

theoretical paradigms and their various debates in the study of Chinese politics are, *mutatis mutandis*, already considered in the Soviet-Russian case. To the extent that key questions in the debate on the existence of socialist regimes were resolved, contributed to the research, or met an impasse, their general neglect after 1989-1991 gave further impetus to the assumption that China is a unique case in the history of such power. Its economic might (despite the associated faith in the liberalisation of the political model) further provided seeming evidence for the endurance and/or longevity of its ideological nature. What emerged, instead of the flawed interpretations of Fukuyama's thesis, was not a post-ideological but a post-Soviet world where other socialist regimes outside of the Soviet Union's traditional sphere of influence continued to prosper. The same can be said of interpretations of Maoist China during and after the period under Deng Xiaoping. Nevertheless, the study of the "original" period of socialist rule in China cannot be disregarded as it deals with the founder and the early years of the CCP, as well the ideological-revolutionary nature of the party. An approach that does not account for the persistence of these forces necessarily translates into the image of an unchanging China, characterised by the schizophrenic notions described above. The debate on (economically) engaging China follows much the same logic.

### **Questionable Determinism in China's Rise**

The determinism and, therefore, the resulting unquestionable acceptance of this trajectory fails to resolve perennial questions in the debate which can be most succinctly described as the question of China's rise itself (Breslin, 2017, see also 2021) and the role of the CCP within Chinese society amid that rising trajectory (Ringen 2016). Leading that rising power is, of course, a visibly organised body that holds a definite purpose other than retaining power *for power's sake*, which ultimately serves the question of more or less power (or control) over the society it governs. It is here important to note that the more "invisible" departments of this

political party (particularly the Departments of Organisation, Propaganda, and Discipline) are crucial for the continuing existence of the CCP. Put in the light of the very visible leader, these relatively hidden offices make the ways of the party all the opaquer and require further analysis of their own. Nevertheless, the idea of a harmonious party-state in China obscures the internal strife and struggle of political processes. This invisibility stands against presumed continuous political turmoil in liberal democracies yet does exist even in the Chinese regime (and maybe even more existential).

The outcome-driven debate on China's rise is, to a large extent, often framed as an overly simplified scenario, as illustrated by the concept of *Sinophrenia*. Some argue that the prevailing discourse on China's rise fails to capture the complexity of international politics, particularly as a result of a particular focus on China as the foremost actor in its own rise, but not in the international system (Harris; Trubowitz 2021; Turner 2016). In brief, a rising power's rise to power is a process by which the socialist rising power as led by the one-party state seeks to modernise and whose economic-military power must match the identity it perceives of itself and the status it wishes to achieve. However, it cannot merely be the (non-)recognition of such desired status by other world powers that decides war with the rising power (Ward 2017). Nor can it simply take place at the intersection of rising and declining trajectories of the respective powers as set out by the Thucydides Trap (Allison 2017b). As this thesis demonstrates, it is the temporal outlook of the rising power's governing authority that renders meaning to this very event; and which requires much closer attention. Commenting on how abstract notions of time can serve a purpose, US historian John Clive notes: "Nothing works better to further a cause – good or bad – than to lend it legitimacy by supplying it with a long heritage" (Clive 1989, 7). Because of the absence of a self-perpetuating mandate, the CCP's fear of getting lost to time stands in stark contrast with its ambitions to exist and rule forever.

What follows is that continuous economic growth (expressed in GDP) and its associated prediction of China overtaking the US as the biggest economy in the world (and, thus, it is assumed, world power) may not be the most preferable indicator for judging the viability of China's rise as such a process (Magnus 2021). Military power and its translation into actual, lasting might is also traditionally considered fraught with difficulty and, as such, cannot serve this purpose. Taken together, economic growth also does not directly convert into military might, notwithstanding the output of weaponry and other military hardware (Beckley 2018). For the party itself, unlimited economic growth must be avoided if it is to steer clear of obsolescence through the market. State capitalism, then, is not a desirable description as it risks putting an end to the CCP's *raison d'être* as well as prescribing a takeover by the state bureaucracy of its offices solely in the pursuit of economic growth and commerce.

It is for this reason that the thesis puts forward the interpretative framework of revolutionary-ideological aspirations of the CCP and its ambitions to bring about a qualitative change in society as set out by the precepts of Marxism-Leninism and its application in Chinese history and context. The next unit of this concluding chapter will further discuss the implications of such a domestic understanding of (re-)ordering of society (as opposed to that of global order) and the impact of the CCP's continuing attempts to correct the adverse influence of decades of economic growth. This argument may seem contradictory since it is, essentially, China's economic boom that sustains its continued rise to power. This research, however, is primarily concerned with a conceptual study of the debate on the rise of China, offering a relatively minor yet important reconfiguration of this debate away from the now traditional view on this development that it describes as outcome-based and in terms of a clash between great powers. By applying a positive understanding of the historical materialism driving China's rise, as evidenced by its adherence to an official ideology of Marxism-Leninism, the

inevitable dialectic of success may be studied but must, simultaneously, be rejected as deterministic. In a second step, it then becomes possible to interrogate the strengths and weaknesses of the narrative surrounding China's rise as led by the CCP, instead of accepting this teleological alternative as truth.

The study of the rise and fall of nations, as it is here applied to China's rise, speaks to a historical interest but also ought to consider its social implications for Chinese society. In recent years, societies in the "West" have been confronted by the growing impulses (once again?) of populists who claim that they are the only barrier that stands in between the people and an invasion from the "East." Such pessimistic declinism stands as an opposite to the triumphal notions of inevitable victory of China's rise. The decline of the one, it is argued, here holds within it the rise of the other. On the international front, this debate is most visibly presented, respectively, by the US and China, the topic of this thesis. China's rise thus emerges as the mirror opposite, and natural product of, a declining global hegemon that is the representative of the "Western" world order that is, by consequence, also fraying. However, this perspective is for the most part a conservative outlook on reinvigorating the own nation by positioning it against the foreign nation (and vice versa in both cases).

A deterministic understanding of China's rise then translates itself into the foregone conclusion that China is now a superpower. This assumption not only ignores questions raised by an already flawed Thucydides Trap, which sees conflict as a cathartic ritual for the sceptre of world power to be passed; it also neglects to explore in full how such a conflict would take place. Nowhere is this perspective more simplistically rendered than in reports on the CCP's one-hundredth anniversary. The resilience of authoritarian regimes is here considered through the twin lens of longevity and durability, or age and power. Following the perspective of these

regimes itself, the logic is taken further to merge party, state, and nation as a whole without considering the dynamics at play between these various dimensions (see below).

Moving the analysis of China's rise beyond interpretations of (meta)physical spatiality, this thesis focuses much on the temporal dimension of this phenomenon, as indeed suggested by the "rise" of China over time (roughly 1949 to the present). Essentially, it distils China's rise to great or, to some, superpower and critically reflects upon it. Now a basic building block of many a debate, there is an assumption that China's rise is completed. China, it seems, has risen. The official narrative tells a different story, however, and still considers this development a move from a big power [大国] to a great power [强国]. Less mention is made of China to be a superpower [超级强国], but this category may, for reasons of completeness, also be given. Interestingly, the absence of this superlative concept is indicative of the updated debate where the rise of China, though already determined to succeed by the official leadership, need not be confrontational. In this regard, the twenty-year period of strategic opportunity as envisioned by the CCP in 2002 is often cited. Rather than evidence for the supposed ability to think and strategise over the long-term, it showcases a strategic assessment of the international environment at the time. This time span, which is much more limited than it is often attributed to be, came to an early end after 2016 but was quickly redefined as a period of historic opportunity. This shift, however minor linguistically, demonstrates a certain sensitivity to short-term breaks and challenges within the long-term horizon set to 2049 and, still, determined to be the date upon which the PRC is determined to emerge as the world's foremost great power.

Moreover, this shift from an understanding of the future as a strategic to a historic period of opportunity is remarkable but did, of course, not come solely as the result of greater international attention to the rise of China. The CCP, as the party-state leading this development, also saw itself necessitated to move the goalposts from aspiration to actuality: to deliver on the



objectives it had set earlier. As mentioned earlier, China's miracle of economic growth sets it apart in its ability to actually fulfil its rise to power, as compared to previous powers in history; in its quest to become a great power, the CCP still ought to make that fundamental leap in a timely manner, while faced with dwindling resources. In this way, one of the main concerns of this thesis are the strategic implications of such a growth stage in which the rising power moves from quantitative to qualitative change, building on the assumptions that the temporal horizon represents the rising power's endeavour to become a great power and, importantly, that this trajectory can succeed. The approach here developed thus goes beyond GDP growth as an indicator for this trajectory and analyses how the period towards 2049 (as divided by the CCP in two 15-year periods) figures within that trajectory as a temporal objective. It is this date that in the official pronouncement that China's rise is captured in that aforementioned period of historic opportunity.

Another concern of this thesis is whether China is or will be a new kind or rising power. Despite unprecedented economic growth setting it up for completion much more, arguably, than its historical predecessors, the Chinese party-state objective of 2049 is not inevitable nor without obstacles; let alone further study that ought to be dedicated to the sources of this miracle of economic growth. Sino-centric explanations furthermore present the Chinese party-state as a largely unitary actor and, thus, China's rise as a "normal" rising trajectory subject to the expected forces. Here, neither the traditional interpretation of China's rise as the restoration of the Chinese position in the world before the Great Qing's decline and fall during and after the century of humiliation; nor the more CCP-centric narrative of inevitable and peaceful rise can be true. The spatiality of such assertions is in part misleading. Ahistoric in its presenting of desired developments in the future in terms of the past (as a cyclical outlook), it ignores the

temporality envisioned by the CCP's historical materialism which is fundamentally different from that held by the imperial dynasty.

### **Whither China's Rise?**

Interpretations of China's rise at the systemic level crucially ignore these domestic factors, paying little attention to the rising power's political institutions, its ideology, and its associated ambitions in fulfilling this rise to power. As a socialist party-state, for example, China is decidedly moving upwards, but that trajectory ought not to be considered as *a priori* true. While the rising power's deterministic tendencies are, then, often understood in terms of war and conflict, the temporal strategy behind this trajectory is but seldom considered. The case of China's rise is interesting, however, since unlike most of its preceding rising powers (with the exclusion of the Soviet Union), it is a socialist power. Its economic growth moving forward, as well as the promised improvements in living conditions may set it off against this historical example as well, the fate of which the CCP desperately seeks to avoid.

To what extent, then, does China's rise towards great-power status align with a more general theory of the rise and fall of such powers? This thesis interrogates this distinction by demonstrating the correlation between socialist ideology and rising power. It does so by taking socialist rising powers as a unique category of its kind that is, by definition, ideologically divergent. It can be concluded that China behaves contrary to what the general theory of rising power would expect. Indeed, greater assertiveness is here only predicted after the status claims on the international domain are actively denied (Ward 2017). This thesis argues that the move from aspiration to actuality by 2049, and especially the temporal strategy thereto by the CCP, provides the answer. To demonstrate the importance of such a temporal update to the, largely, spatial theoretical approach to (socialist) rising powers, this thesis further argues that success (or failure) cannot be the result of claims currently dominating the debate, as characterised by

the outcome-based approach to China's rise. Neither the Thucydides Trap, nor the revival of China's imperial past, reveal a deterministic view on the same topic, without an understanding of the nature and character of the PRC as led by the CCP, a politically and economically different entity than previous rising powers or China before 1949.

China's rise, of course, takes place in a world of liberal democracies. These states vary widely in their interpretation of this ideology but, nevertheless, agree on its most fundamental of components. Classic frames of a New Cold War between liberalism and authoritarianism, or capitalism versus communism, thus cannot be upheld in the study of China's rise to power; much like it is unclear how the Thucydides Trap might play out in this case. The rise of China ultimately differs from that of the USSR's in power as well as in origins. Rising not as a result of global war but as a result of great economic success. China's contemporary rise is also different from earlier periods in Chinese history where the rulers over this geographical space claimed a position on the world stage. While the Great Qing, China's last imperial dynasty, was not definitely moribund but re-engaged the modern world for survival, it ultimately proved unable to revive the earlier held position during the Self-Strengthening Movement (Wright 1957). Its fall would expose the nation to the world and ultimately inspire the question fought over by the KMT and the CCP.

Deterministic readings of China's rise, as such, then ought to be avoided, not in the least since 1949 presents an actual socialist break in history. To test whether a general theory of rising power, as captured by the literature, is applicable to China's rise or if it can be updated accordingly to consider such ideologically divergent powers, it is worth asking: will China rise as other powers before it, perhaps being successful or ultimately failing to realise this ambition? In other words, will China be a different kind of rising power or is it challenged by the same

forces its predecessor had to grapple with? It is clear that, to investigate this query, it is important to dedicate further study to:

- The weight of ideology that is to be accorded to the rising power's trajectory, particularly in terms of a (spatio-)temporal outlook on that phenomenon;
- The ability to convert economic-military power into actual might; and
- The understanding that the rise to power for a socialist party-state is a race against time instead of a preordained building towards the future.

The opposite is also true: for the positive interpretation of China's rise to power to hold ground, it must be falsified. As a direct opposite to the concept of 'rising power,' the alternative of 'falling power'(Brands 2018a; Brands; Beckley 2021; Michta 2021) is interesting as a reckoning with the *Sinophrenic* interpretations of China's rise (see above). This argument suggests that causes for war are more clearly pronounced after a rise to power comes to an end and starts to decline or fall. It builds on previous research on the status concerns of such powers and agrees with the notion that war is not a desirable option for a rising power unless that desired status is denied or impossible to attain by peaceful means. The problem is, of course, that a juxtaposition of 'rising' and 'falling' power is merely a conceptual approach to the abstractions of the rise and fall of nations.

Neither of these concepts reveals much about the dynamics at play in a power's rise but might, particularly given a failure to actualise those ambitions, spur the nation into a cataclysmic tailspin. Similarly, 'peaking power' also suggest a loss of the ability to fulfil the desired ambitions, giving rise to tensions at home and abroad that might further undermine the rise to power (Krickovic; Zhang 2020; Stahlman 2021). Indeed, as Michael Beckley and Hal Brands contend: "China is a risen power, not a rising one: it has acquired formidable geopolitical capabilities, but its best days are behind it" (2021). While this thesis reserves a further expansion on this question for further research, the present study yet accepts the concept

of ‘rising power’ as it reveals a certain sensitivity to the temporal strategy and outlook that is displayed by such trajectories, especially where a socialist rising power is concerned.

## **2. Suggestions for Further Study**

Having discussed the temporal dimension of China’s rise, one of the many remaining questions pertaining this phenomenon has to do with those other parameters touched upon at the beginning of this thesis. The “what” and the “why” of China’s rise are of interest here. Indeed, it can be argued that a temporal understanding of this rise to power is ultimately incomplete without any notion of the reasons behind, and the ambitions going forward, that drive this trajectory to great-power status.

This thesis demonstrates why the sense of inevitability pervading the debate on China’s rise obscures more than it reveals. Indeed, the discussion is largely an abstract idea, necessitated by the ideological outlook of the party-state, rather than an actual diagnosis of reality. That the CCP aims to continuously position itself as a long-ruling party speaks to this notion of preordained destiny through it ought to deliver that rise to great-power status. It, however, also shows a permanent sense of insecurity through its anti-democratic nature, lest it fails to perpetuate itself. In so doing, the party ought to continue to actively deliver public goods. The answer, at least to Ringen, is that this political organization is not holding on to the power for power’s sake, but it is seeking to raise the overall happiness of the Chinese people over whom it governs. It declares this ambition as the original aspiration and the historical mission of the party, thereby solidifying a mandate by the people and for the people. Rather than the elevated notions of ideology, it is here the political everyday that is most important for the CCP’s survival as China’s ruling Party-state. In fact, one could argue, that the everyday shapes those big questions.

The rise and fall approach to China's rise fails to realise this part. As a result, it neglects to account for the dynamics at play within such a rising power as China, here described. The wellbeing, happiness, and security of the Chinese population, thus, precedes attaining a certain – let alone dominant – position on the world stage. In other words, the decline of overall economic growth does not mean that China's rise to power is coming to an end. Instead, it reveals a shifting of priorities. Here, suggestions of the opposite of inevitable success falls into the same old logical trap as those set out by *Sinophrenia* (see above). Because of the lack of a most basic understanding of the impact of the CCP's ideology on its approach to Chinese society, this either-or perspective on China's rise is deeply flawed.

By embedding itself among the Chinese people as a *Volk*, the Party-state as its representative must necessarily present a vision of society where it continues to play a role, not merely by means of terror but also – evidently – of consent. It does so by identifying the mass line, the main contradiction in society but also, and most clearly expressed under Xi Jinping as a result of the new priorities of growth, the ambition to provide common prosperity for that society. What is envisioned is a redistribution of goods part egalitarian, part democratic, that seeks to forge a Chinese people's community. This is necessarily a social state confined within the geographical and ethnic boundaries of land and people. Nevertheless, this ambition is clearly opposed to that of a welfare state but is instead aimed at creating an ideal community for the Chinese people, as envisioned by the CCP and, thereby, fulfilling the Party's creed of servitude. Such an intervention, however, is not intended to slow down China's economy nor its rise to power. Conclusions that the CCP is, in true socialist spirit, correcting the worst excesses of capitalism (prime among these the income gap) may then be interpreted as the progressive development within the Chinese Party-state's relationship with society. In Ringen's words, the welfare hypothesis seems to be more convincing than the power hypothesis (2016).

How, though, is it possible to explain the re-assertion – indeed, re-verticalisation – of party leadership over all aspects of state, military, and society evidenced by the affirmation that is the Party, first and foremost, that will lead all.

Through such a re-establishing of Party control, the CCP seeks to actively avoid Soviet-style collapse and provide a solution to the ideological-revolutionary obsolescence it so fears. Rather than faltering in its existence after 2029 (Ci 2019), the CCP is extending, and potentially solving, its problem of legitimacy by bringing its ideological aspiration into a communal reality. That it has tried to do so since the 1950s onwards does not mean, however, that a return to High Maoism is underway. Instead, Xi's leadership follows a different path. A possible avenue for further research is here how a cultural revolution, that is a transformation of society according to the (reinvigorated) ideological-revolutionary ideals of the Party-state may come about. An overemphasis on the legacy of the period of reform and opening-up, as it is now refashioned into reform, development, and stability impedes theorizing on such a potentially shocking impact on society. Indeed, continued emphasis on China reforming and, in one way or the other, liberalising stands in the way of seriously considering the CCP's cultural revolutionary ambitions for Chinese society beyond the constrained period of 1966-1976 (Schmalzer 2021, 762). This reluctance to consider a cultural revolution beyond the historically confined movement of the time not only fails to consider the continuation of the CCP's communal thinking but also upholds China's rise as a unique phenomenon, not allowing for a comparative framework informed by history.

Research on the creation of a people's community, in the national-socialist case of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, has received renewed attention in the past decade (Wildt 2019; Thießen 2007). Johann Chapoutot, for example, uses the concept of a cultural revolution as derived from the Maoist context, to explore the ideal community in the minds of the Nazi-German political

leadership (2017). Exploring the validity of this comparison, especially when considering the differences between the Leninist regime of the CCP and that of Nazi Germany, would take us to far. Instead, it is worthwhile to consider what it means for a Party-state, or any form of government for that matter, to mold society in its particular vision of modernity. China's imperial past may here be informative, but not for reasons of cultural continuity associated with five-thousand years of history, or the revival of an All-Under-Heaven (*Tianxia*) world order. This thesis has largely rejected these interpretations of the CCP as a new ruling dynasty [党天下] (Y. Zheng 2010) because such perspectives all too often fall into the fallacy of assuming a monolithic Han-Chinese China (Y. Jiang 2018, 34) that went unchanged in form throughout centuries of history. Doing so fails to account for the various periods of disunity in that geographical space we now understand as China, but also the various form of state (and especially non-Chinese ruling dynasties) that ruled over its people and its territory.

Going forward, an imperial critique of the CCP's version of history will perhaps be most worthwhile to get a clearer understanding of what lies ahead. China's rise, indeed, is not so inevitable but fits within a larger historical pattern of uniting, organising, and governing China. The contemporary CCP is well aware of this historical fact. In other words, it is not so much that the CCP under Xi Jinping is making China more ideological than in a Marxist sense of the word. The Party's teleological project, that of the rejuvenation of China as guided by historical materialism, ought here not be confused for a purely Marxist undertaking. Indeed, Marxism-Leninism in the Chinese context, it is itself more closely connected to Soviet-Russian communism, rather than Marxism more generally speaking (Tucker 1978, xx). Contemporary efforts to *sinicise* [中国化] Marxism, although not explicitly explored in this thesis, also feature in this context. China's rise is thus much more of a spiritual struggle, than an actually existing matter that is easily explained by a devotion to Marxism. Here, the road towards rejuvenation



is much more important than the destination itself, because it serves to fortify the CCP's ruling position. From the perspective of legitimacy, for example, its considerations are more Leninist than Marxist in upholding a particular vision of China's future as brought about by, and only by, the virtues of the CCP; lest the party be recognised as obsolete and superfluous.

Before concluding, it is therefore crucial to point to two major themes in the CCP's ideology: the breaking of China's historical cycle, as well as the conflation between country, nation, and people. The formulaic notion of "rich country, rejuvenated nation, happy people" [国家富强, 民族振兴, 人民幸福], for example, is a Party-state interpretation of China, Chineseness, and the Sinophone that conflates matters of nation, ethnicity, and language to the singular framework of the CCP, the People's Republic of China, and its particular notions of national belonging since 1949. While it is now increasingly commonplace, this thesis only minimally accounts for the question of critically disaggregating these complex concepts. Instead, because of its focus on tracing the ideological narrative of the CCP on China's rise and its future, it is important to suggest this topic for further research. This omission is also the reason why the present thesis is only able to comment on the CCP's vision, rather than making more general observations on the reasons why mankind as a whole is so often taken by fascinating stories of decline, fall, and glorious rebirth; as well as the coercion and violence that is justified to reach this goal. In order to so, studies that follow ought to pay attention to the notion of the "people" in the minds of the political leadership in China and how its motto of "to serve the people" [为人民服务] fundamentally establishes a connection between Party, state, and nation. The particular naming of the Communist Party of China [中国共产党], for example, represents an enduring problem for students of Chinese politics for linguistic, as well as for interpreting that Party-state's ideology. A more creative translation such as the Chinese

People's Party (Schoenhals 1999) may very well aid in gaining a clearer understanding of the Party's pursuits, as well as its ideological objectives.

Returning to the singular notions of Chinese state, nation, and ethnicity, perhaps the most glaring omission in this thesis is the lack of a discussion on the nationality question [民族问题] in China. This is what Kevin Carrico calls the “disciplinary crisis” of China Studies in dealing with the question of Xinjiang and China's treatment of the Uyghurs (2022). In the quasi-democratic nature of the CCP, whose institutions are aimed at the betterment of the people, normative interpretations of a labour camp system may even be presented as more benign than it actually is. While recognising the different ethnic minorities that reside within the territory of China, these are increasingly assimilated into a superimposed Chinese nation [中华民族] in which Han and non-Han peoples alike are the explicit subjects of CCP rule (Millward 2022; Chaudhuri 2022). Given these developments, it would be an ignorant exercise to disregard China's policies in Xinjiang as anything but the necessary, if harsh consequences of the political leadership's vision of development and progress. This crisis illuminates the complexities in the study of the Chinese Party-state, which are as varied as professional dependency on China (Tenzin; Lee 2022), matters of complicity (Pils 2021), self-censorship (Klotzbücher, Sascha; Kraushaar, Frank; Lycas, Alexis; Suhadolnik 2020), scholarly fatigue (Romig 2020), as well as disillusionment with romantic vision on that society (Roetz 2016). In the continuing debate on China, it will be useful to work towards a framework that accepts the socialist ideology of the Party-state, while studying its evolving character and the most repressive iterations of its rule.

### **3. Conclusion on China's Rise**

In the literature on the rise and fall of great powers, Rome features heavily from classic studies of how this empire came to an end to more metaphysical interpretations of how its fall can be

corrected, as it were, by its contemporary successor states. This notion lives on in cultural approaches to the generalised “West” as embodying the Graeco-Roman tradition to interpretations of the Anglo-American world power. A variation on this theme is, of course, that of the decline of the West, the fall of the US empire, and the subsequent rise of China that will replace it. It is clear that descriptions of the rise and fall of nations hold within them clear conceptualisations of a new and coming world order. The study of China’s rise is no different. From a theological point of view, such invocations are quite clearly referring to the apocalypse or, in any event, a judgement of some kind. In secular history, more clearly, this event refers to the transition of (world) power from one government to the next (as in the case of the USA after 1945), or the prediction thereof (as in the assumed case of China’s rise in the present and near future). It is a re-arrangement of world affairs with an implied coming to power of another leading or hegemonic nation. Indeed, in many ways, the predicted collapse of Rome, or in its contemporary fashion of the Anglo-American empire, can be read as the particular omen of the apocalypse itself.

This thesis is not concerned with exploring the religious debates on this issue, yet they are worthwhile to touch upon. On the analysis presented in this thesis, the question remains: where do we fit the rise of China in a coming world order, should it emerge as such? It is an interesting thought experiment that requires the hypothesised conclusion, as done above, that China’s rise will indeed succeed and, therefore, fulfil its own prediction of inevitability. Think of the following description of China’s rise, made at the very end of the twentieth century and before China’s rise it is understood today.

**“Contemporary international uncertainty over the rise of Chinese power is the latest manifestation of this political process [of managing future great-power conflict].** For some, the prospect of China’s emergence as a global power suggests the likelihood of significant international instability. [However,] one of the most prominent elements of post-Cold War international relations is the increasing importance of China to both economic and strategic outcomes at the global and regional levels, and relatedly to individual states’ long-term considerations of their national interests. China’s importance reflects two related factors. **The first is the sustained expansion of the Chinese economy since 1979 and the implications for Chinese long-term economic and strategic power. The second is that China’s growing strategic and economic presence is most felt in East Asia,** which many observers believe will become the economic and strategic focus of major powers in the twenty-first century” (Johnston, R.; Ross, 1999a, pp. xi–xii; own emphasis, A.D.)

Such an approach also presumes the gradual decline and eventual fall of the USA as the contemporary hegemonic nation, after which the mantle of global leadership must pass to China (again assuming that China is willing and able to do so). Millenarian religious debates would here argue that a new world order will not come about as predicted by China’s historical materialism, but by some other, highly divine entity. Philosophically, however, the question olds up. Contemporary China, as led by the CCP, is however not divinely inspired. In its imperial history, new ruling dynasties would often justify their coming to power via the Mandate of Heaven [天命], a governing device derived from ancient Chinese history that justified the Emperor’s position on the earthly throne as the Son of Heaven [天子] (see, for example, Liu, 2015, p. 280). Or think about the Taiping Rebellion of 1850 to 1864 (Jen 1975). Contrary to such spiritual guidance, however, it is clear that the CCP’s China is clearly materialist in its vision of the future. The sense of inevitability, nevertheless, remains. It makes for an interesting study, since one critic of socialist regimes, ironically labelled the belief in the laws as set out by Marxism-Leninism as the “comrades’ faith” (van het Reve 1989).

This teleology, the announcement of a victory all but achieved, necessarily obscures “profound weakness[es] behind China’s rise” (Rozelle; Hell 2020, 3). Reviewing the Party-state’s outlook in 2022, Andrew Scobell aptly asked the question: “if Xi Jinping and his fellow Politburo members are so consumed with an essentially short-term goal – retaining power – why do they devote so much time, energy, and resources to medium- and long-term planning?

The answer [is] that they are quite confident about near-term survival and far more worried about regime *perpetuation*” (Scobell, 2022, p. 156; emphasis in original). It is an excellent concluding thought worth reprinting here, because it goes to the core of what China’s rise is all about. It is for this reason that even the CCP is going back to basics, with widespread reference to original aspirations, historical missions, and formative questions asked during the time spent in the Yan’an Soviet, the spiritual home of the CCP during the early twentieth century (Esherick 2022; Koss 2018).

How then is the CCP moving from aspiration to actuality? For the reasons outlined above, this thesis made an attempt to study the Party-state with little to no input from dynastic history as an exercise to note the different political formats, the influence of a foreign ideology, and the future of China’s rise as being undetermined, especially by any form of historical cyclicity. From a historical point of view, however, it is still possible to make useful observations on the contemporary Party-state, bringing the current period of CCP rule more in line with China’s presumably centuries-old history. Referring back to that earlier notion of the Communist Party as the most capable political organisation to lead the country, further attention can be paid to the manner in which previous ruling powers in the past justified their rule in much the same way. Think for example of the non-Chinese Mongol-Yuan or Manchu-Qing dynasties. During these times, the geographical space that is China was perceived as an entity with its own particular history and bureaucratic traditions which could be copied or amended as necessary. The governing form of state thus became malleable, while the idea of China as a space, much less than as a nation at the time, continued in larger or lesser forms as the empire expanded or collapsed.

From this brief incursion into China’s imperial history, it is finally also possible to understand what is meant by a Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation under the CCP

leadership of Xi Jinping. Much more than the revival of a certain idea of imperial China, this general policy positions the CCP as the sole agent of bringing about a bright, and decidedly socialist, future. The general ambition of a Great Rejuvenation is also used interchangeably with the specific policy of creating a modernised socialist great power, thereby further demonstrating the socialist content of this nationalist undertaking. By bringing the Party back into the story, then, it is possible to gain a better understanding of what is commonly referred to as China's rise. It is a process that is undergoing various causal processes. Its ultimate result, however, is not set in stone. Its description is merely the contemporary statement on its present state of affairs. In other words, there is very little long-term thinking at play in China's rise.

# Bibliography

- Aamir, Adnan. 2019. "Pakistan Insurgent Attacks on China Project Seen to Persist." *Asia Nikkei*. 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/Pakistan-insurgent-attacks-on-China-project-seen-to-persist>.
- Abrami, Regina M.; Malesky, Edmund J.; Zheng, Yu. 2021. "Vietnam Through Chinese Eyes: Divergent Accountability in Single-Party Regimes." *Problems of Post-Communism* 68 (3).
- AFP. 2019. "China's Rubber-Stamp Parliament at a Glance." *Agence France-Presse*. 2019. <https://www.france24.com/en/20190305-chinas-rubber-stamp-parliament-glance>.
- Aghebi, Motolani; Virtanen, Petri. 2017. "Dependency Theory – A Conceptual Lens to Understand China's Presence in Africa?" *Forum for Development Studies* 44 (3).
- Agnew, John. 1994. "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory." *Review of International Political Economy* 1 (1): 53–80.
- . 2007. "Know-Where: Geographies of Knowledge of World Politics." *International Political Sociology* 1: 138–48.
- AidData. n.d. "Mapping China's Global Development Footprint: AidData's Geocoded Global Chinese Official Finance Dataset." *AidData*. Accessed September 19, 2019. <https://www.aiddata.org/china-project-locations>.
- Aidoo, Richard; Hess, Steve. 2015. "Non-Interference 2.0: China's Evolving Foreign Policy towards a Changing Africa." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 1: 107–39.
- Akhter, Majed. 2018. "Geopolitics of the Belt and Road: Space, State, and Capital in China and Pakistan." In *Logistical Asia: The Labour of Making a World Region*, edited by Ranabir Neilson, Brett; Rossiter, Ned; Samaddar. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Alden, Chris; Alves, Ana Cristina. 2016. "China's Regional Forum Diplomacy in the Developing World: Socialisation and the 'Sinosphere.'" *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Alden, Chris; Zheng, Yixiao. 2018. "China's Changing Role in Peace and Security in Africa." In *China and Africa: Building Peace and Security Cooperation on the Continent*, edited by Laura Alden, Chris; Alao, Abiodun; Chun, Zhang; Barber. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Allan, Bentley B.; Vucetic, Srdjan; Hopf, Ted. 2018. "The Distribution of Identity and the Future of International Order: China's Hegemonic Prospects." *International Organization*.
- Allison, Graham. 2017a. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

- . 2017b. “The Thucydides Trap.” *Foreign Policy*. 2017. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/09/the-thucydides-trap/>.
- Altman, Dan. 2017. “By Fait Accompli, Not Coercion: How States Wrest Territory from Their Adversaries: Research Note.” *International Studies Quarterly* 61.
- . 2020. “The Evolution of Territorial Conquest after 1945 and the Limits of the Territorial Integrity Norm.” *International Organization*.
- Amalrik, Andrei. 1970. *Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Ameyaw-Brobby, Thomas. 2021. “A Critical Juncture? COVID-19 and the Fate of the U.S.-China Struggle for Supremacy.” *World Affairs*.
- Amin, Samir. 2022. “Beyond Eurocentrism.” *MR Online*. 2022.
- An, David. 2020. “Time Horizons Drive Potential Taiwan Cross-Strait Conflict.” *Military Review* September.
- An, Ning; Sharp, Jo; Shaw, Ian. 2020. “Towards a Confucian Geopolitics.” *Dialogues in Human Geography*.
- Anand, Dibyesh. 2002. “A Story to Be Told: IR, Postcolonialism, and the Discourse of Tibetan (Trans)National Identity.” In *Power, Postcolonialism, and International Relations: Reading Race, Gender and Class*, edited by Sheila Chowdhry, Geeta; Nair. London: Routledge.
- Anderlini, Jamil; Sender, Henny; Bokhari, Farhan. 2018. “Pakistan Rethinks Its Role in Xi’s Belt and Road Plan.” *Financial Times*. 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/d4a3e7f8-b282-11e8-99ca-68cf89602132>.
- Andersen, Kristian G.; Rambaut, Andrew; Lipkin, W. Ian; Holmes, Edward C.; Garry, Robert F. 2020a. “The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2.” *Nature Medicine* 26: 450–52.
- . 2020b. “The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2.” *Nature Medicine* 26.
- Andornino, Giovanni B. 2017. “The Belt and Road Initiative in China’s Emerging Grand Strategy of Connective Leadership.” *China & World Economy* 25 (5): 4–22.
- Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 2017a. “Beyond Weber: Conceptualizing An Alternative Ideal Type of Bureaucracy in Developing Contexts.” *Regulation & Governance* 11 (3).
- . 2017b. “Direct Improvisation: The China Model that Other Countries Can Learn From.” *The Asia Dialogue*. <https://theasiadialogue.com/2017/06/15/directed-improvisation-the-china-model-that-other-countries-can-learn-from/>
- . 2018a. “Autocracy with Chinese Characteristics: Beijing’s Behind-the-Scenes Reforms.” *Foreign Affairs*. 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2018-04-16/autocracy-chinese-characteristics>.
- . 2018b. “China’s Belt and Road Is a Campaign, Not a Conspiracy.” *Bloomberg*. 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-09-27/china-s-belt-and-road-initiative-is-a-campaign-not-a-conspiracy>.
- . 2019a. “China’s Corrupt Meritocracy.” *Project Syndicate*. 2019. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-corrupt-meritocracy-by-yuen-yuen-ang-2019-10?barrier=accesspaylog>.
- . 2019b. “Demystifying Belt and Road: The Struggle to Define China’s ‘Project of the Century.’” *Foreign Affairs*. 2019. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-05-22/demystifying-belt-and-road>.
- AP. 2020. “China Delayed Releasing Coronavirus Info, Frustrating WHO.” *Alternative Press*. 2020. <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-health-ap-top-news-virus-outbreak-public-health-3c061794970661042b18d5aeaad9fae>.



- Arendt, Hannah. 2017. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. London: Penguin Random House.
- Aven, Terje. 2013. "On the Meaning of a Black Swan in a Risk Context." *Safety Science* 57.
- Babones, Salvatore. 2017. "Taking China Seriously: Relationality, Tianxia, and the 'Chinese School of International Relations.'" *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.
- . 2019a. "China's Accidental Belt and Road Turns Six." *Foreign Policy*. 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/06/chinas-accidental-belt-and-road-turns-six/>.
- . 2019b. "From Tianxia to Tianxia: The Generalization of a Concept." *Chinese Political Science Review*.
- Bagshaw, Eryk; Galloway, Anthony; Gray, Darren. 2020. "Chinese Consul-General Crashes Hunt's Press Conference." *The Sydney Morning Herald*. 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/chinese-consul-general-crashes-hunt-s-press-conference-20200429-p54oa6.html>.
- Bai, Chunli. 2018. "Editorial: Road to Innovation." *Bulletin of the Chinese Academy of Sciences* 32 (3): 130–31.
- Bai, Zhili; Liu, Juan. 2020. "China's Governance Model and System in Transition." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 9 (1).
- Balcer, Adam; Petrov, Nikolay. 2012. "The Future of Russia: Modernization or Decline?" *Demos Europa Centre for European Strategy - Carnegie Moscow Center*. 2012. [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/demos\\_www\\_calosc.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/demos_www_calosc.pdf).
- Balding, Christopher. 2018. "Why Democracies Are Turning Against Belt and Road: Corruption, Debt, and Backlash." *Foreign Affairs*. 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-24/why-democracies-are-turning-against-belt-and-road>.
- Bandurski, David. 2019. "The Party Is Struggling." *China Media Project*. 2019. <https://chinamediaproject.org/2019/09/06/the-party-is-struggling/>.
- . 2020. "Telling China's COVID-19 Story." *China Media Project*. 2020. <https://chinamediaproject.org/2020/06/10/telling-chinas-covid-19-story/>.
- . 2021. "Propaganda Soars into Orbit." *China Media Project*. 2021. <https://chinamediaproject.org/2021/01/29/propaganda-soars-into-orbit/>.
- Baranovitch, Nimrod. 2021. "A Strong Leader for A Time of Crisis: Xi Jinping's Strongman Politics as A Collective Response to Regime Weakness." *Journal of Contemporary China* 30 (128).
- Barker, Thomas. 2017. "The Real Source of China's Soft Power." *The Diplomat*. 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/the-real-source-of-chinas-soft-power/>.
- Barmé, Geremie R. 2011. "The Children of Yan'an: New Words of Warning to a Prosperous Age." *China Heritage Quarterly*.
- . 2019. "China's Red Empire - To Be or Not to Be? Xu Zhangrun, China Is Not a Red Empire (中國不是一個紅色帝國) - Translated Excerpts." *China Heritage*. 2019. <http://chinaheritage.net/journal/chinas-red-empire-to-be-or-not-to-be/>.
- . 2021. "History as Boredom — Another Plenum, Another Resolution, Beijing, 11 November 2021." *China Heritage*. 2021. <https://chinaheritage.net/journal/history-as-boredom-another-plenum-another-resolution-beijing-11-november-2021/>.
- . 2023. "'I Do Not Believe' — Xu Zhiyong on Being Jailed, Again." *China Heritage*. 2023. <https://chinaheritage.net/journal/i-do-not-believe-xu-zhiyong-on-being-jailed-again/>.
- Baum, Richard. 1994. *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bean, Jonathan J. 1997. "Nikolai Bukharin and the New Economic Policy: A Middle Way?"

- The Independent Review* 2 (1): 79–97.
- Beardson, Timothy. 2013. *Stumbling Giant: The Threats to China's Future*. London: Yale University Press.
- Beatty, Ross. 1982. "Windyfogger and Bureaucratise." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 12 (4).
- Beckley, Michael. 2018. "The Power of Nations: Measuring What Matters." *International Security* 43 (2): 7–44.
- . 2019. "The United States Should Fear a Faltering China: Beijing's Assertiveness Betrays Its Desperation." *Foreign Affairs*. 2019. [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-10-28/united-states-should-fear-faltering-china?utm\\_campaign=tw\\_daily\\_soc&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter\\_posts](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-10-28/united-states-should-fear-faltering-china?utm_campaign=tw_daily_soc&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter_posts).
- . 2023. "The Peril of Peaking Power: Economic Slowdowns and Implications for China's Next Decade." *International Security* 48 (1).
- Beckley, Michael; Brands, Hal. 2021. "The End of China's Rise." *Foreign Affairs*. 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-10-01/end-chinas-rise>.
- Bell, Daniel A. 2015. *China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Belton, Catherine. 2020. *Putin's People: How the KGB Took Back Russia and Then Took on the West*. London: HarperCollins UK.
- Benney, Jonathan. 2016. "Weiwen at the Grassroots: China's Stability Maintenance Apparatus as a Means of Conflict Resolution." *Journal of Contemporary China* 25 (99): 389–405.
- Bergsten, C. Fred. 2008. "A Partnership of Equals: How Washington Should Respond to China's Economic Challenge." *Foreign Affairs* 87 (4): 57–69.
- Berlin, Isaiah. 2004. "The Artificial Dialectic: Generalissimo Stalin and the Art of Government." In *The Soviet Mind: Russian Culture under Communism*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Berry, Jeffrey M. 2002. "Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (4).
- Bew, John. 2019. "Will Trump Go to War in 2019?" *The New Statesman*. 2019. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/north-america/2019/01/will-trump-go-war-2019>.
- Bièvre, David. n.d. "From Chernobyl to COVID: The Sociology of Risk as a Frame of Reference." *HAL*.
- Bishop, Bill. 2021. "国之大者 Matter(s) of National Importance." *Sinocism*. 2021. <https://sinocism.com/p/-matters-of-national-importance-real>.
- Blackwill, Robert D.; Harris, Jennifer, M. 2016. *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Blair, John G. 2016. "The Dual Governing System of the People's Republic of China." *Journal of Public Affairs* 16 (2).
- Blanchard, Jean-Marc F. 2020. "Problematic Prognostications about China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSRI): Lessons from Africa and the Middle East." *Journal of Contemporary China* 29 (122).
- Blanchette, Jude. 2015. "The Devil Is in the Footnotes: On Reading Michael Pillsbury's The Hundred-Year Marathon." *21st Century China*. 2015. <http://www.lewebcafe.com/cambodia/The-Hundred-Year-Marathon.pdf>.
- . 2019. *China's New Red Guards: The Return of Radicalism and the Rebirth of Mao Zedong*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2020. "Ideological Security as National Security." *Center for Strategic & International Studies*. 2020. <https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs->

- [public/publication/201202\\_Blanchette\\_Ideological\\_Security\\_National\\_Security.pdf](#).
- . 2021a. “Xi’s Confidence Game.” *Foreign Affairs*. 2021. [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2021-11-23/xis-confidence-game?utm\\_source=twitter\\_posts&utm\\_campaign=tw\\_daily\\_soc&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2021-11-23/xis-confidence-game?utm_source=twitter_posts&utm_campaign=tw_daily_soc&utm_medium=social).
- . 2021b. “Xi’s Gamble: The Race to Consolidate Power and Stave off Disaster.” *Foreign Affairs*. 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-06-22/xis-gamble>.
- Blanchette, Jude; Medeiros, Evan S. 2021. “Is the Chinese Communist Party Ready for the Future?” *The Washington Quarterly* 44 (2).
- Blankenship, Brian D.; Denison, Benjamin. 2019. “Is America Prepared for Great- Power Competition?” *Survival* 61 (5): 43–64.
- Bliesemann de Guevara, Berit; Goetze, Catherine. 2019. “Myths and the International Politics of Intervention and Statebuild.” In *Intervention and Statebuilding*, edited by Nicolas Lemay-Hébert. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bloomberg. 2012. “Heirs of Mao’s Comrades Rise as New Capitalist Nobility.” *Bloomberg News*. 2012. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-12-26/immortals-beget-china-capitalism-from-citic-to-godfather-of-golf>.
- Bluhm, Richard; Dreher, Axel; Fuchs, Andreas; Parks, Bradley; Strange, Austin; Tierney, Michael. 2018. “Connective Financing: Chinese Infrastructure Projects and the Diffusion of Economic Activity in Developing Countries.” *AidData*. 2018. [http://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/pdfs/WPS64\\_Connective\\_Financing\\_Chinese\\_Infrastructure\\_Projects\\_and\\_the\\_Diffusion\\_of\\_Economic\\_Activity\\_in\\_Developing\\_Countries.pdf](http://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/pdfs/WPS64_Connective_Financing_Chinese_Infrastructure_Projects_and_the_Diffusion_of_Economic_Activity_in_Developing_Countries.pdf).
- BMJ. 2020. “COVID-19: Politicisation, ‘Corruption,’ and Suppression of Science.” *The BMJ*, no. 371.
- Boer, Roland. 2021. “Seeking a Xiaokang Society: Deng Xiaoping and the Reinterpretation of the Confucian Tradition in Chinese Marxism.” In *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, A Guide for Foreigners*. Singapore: Springer.
- Boer, Roland; Yan, Ping. 2021. “‘Not Some Other -Ism’—On Some Western Marxist Misrepresentations of Chinese Socialism.” *International Critical Thought*.
- Bollyky, Thomas J.; Fidler, David P. 2020. “It’s Time for an Independent Coronavirus Review.” *Foreign Affairs*. 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-04-24/its-time-independent-coronavirus-review>.
- Bond, Ian. n.d. “The Moscow Coup(s) of 1991: Who Won and Why Does It Matter?” *Centre for European Reform*. <https://www.cer.eu/insights/moscow-coups-1991-who-won-and-why-does-it-still-matter>
- Boon, Hoo Tiang; Ardy, Charles. 2017. “China and Lilliputians: Small States in a Big Power’s Evolving Foreign Policy.” *Asian Security* 13 (2): 116–31.
- Boucher, Aurélien; Taunay, Benjamin. 2021. “Fragmented Authoritarianism in Action: An Analysis of Interaction between Researcher and Archivist in the People’s Republic of China.” *Archives and Records*.
- Bowie, Julia G. 2019. “Introduction: Scrambling to Achieve a Moderately Prosperous Society.” *Party Watch Annual Report: Scrambling to Achieve a Moderately Prosperous Society*. [https://97da3d29-d157-40bc-9f03-6b6ab7c8dd7f.filesusr.com/ugd/183fcc\\_02a68a6947cd44e89b129af042d0c202.pdf](https://97da3d29-d157-40bc-9f03-6b6ab7c8dd7f.filesusr.com/ugd/183fcc_02a68a6947cd44e89b129af042d0c202.pdf).
- Brady, Anne-Marie. 2017. “Plus Ça Change?: Media Control Under Xi Jinping.” *Problems of Post-Communism* 64 (3–4).
- Braithwaite, Rodric. 2012. *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979-89*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Brands, Hal. 2018a. "Danger: Falling Powers." *The American Interest*. 2018. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/10/24/danger-falling-powers/>.
- . 2018b. "Democracy vs Authoritarianism: How Ideology Shapes Great-Power Conflict." *Survival* 60 (5): 61–114.
- Brands, Hal; Beckley, Michael. 2021. "China Is a Declining Power - and That's the Problem." *Foreign Policy*. 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/24/china-great-power-united-states/>.
- Brautigam, Deborah. 2015. *Will Africa Feed China?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2019. "A Critical Look at Chinese 'Debt-Trap Diplomacy': The Rise of A Meme." *Area Development and Policy*.
- Breslauer, George W. 2002. *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2009. "Understanding China's Regional Rise: Interpretations, Identities and Implications." *International Affairs* 85 (4): 817–35.
- Breslin, Shaun. 2017. "Still Rising or Risen (or Both)? Why and How China Matters." *The Pacific Review* 30 (6): 870–84.
- . 2019. "More than Occidentalism? The Search for Coherence in New Chinese IR Concepts." *Paper Presented to the ISA Annual Convention in Toronto, March 2019*.
- . 2021. *China Risen? Studying Chinese Global Power*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Brooks, Stephen G. 2019. "Power Transitions, Then and Now: Five New Structural Barriers That Will Constrain China's Rise." *China International Strategy Review* 1: 65–83.
- Brooks, Stephen G.; Wohlforth, William C. 2016. "The Rise and the Fall of the Great Powers in the Twenty-First Century: China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position." *International Security* 40 (3): 7–53.
- Brown, Jeremy. 2021. "PRC History in Crisis and Clover." *Positions* 29 (4).
- Brown, Kerry. 2016. *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- . 2017a. "China's Foreign Policy." In *The Critical Transition: China's Priorities for 2021*, edited by Kerry Brown, 7–10. Chatham House.
- . 2017b. *China's World: What Does China Want?* London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.
- . 2018a. *China's 19th Party Congress: Start of a New Era*. London: World Scientific.
- , ed. 2018b. *China's 19th Party Congress: Start of a New Era*. London: World Scientific.
- . 2018c. *China's Dream: The Culture of Chinese Communism and the Secret Sources of Its Power*. London: Polity Press.
- . 2018d. "The Anti-Corruption Struggle in Xi Jinping's China: An Alternative Political Narrative." *Asian Affairs* 49 (1): 1–10.
- . 2019. "The Narratives of the Communist Party of China." *The Centre for the History of War, Media and Society - Kent University*. 2019. <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/munitions-of-the-mind/2019/02/06/the-narratives-of-the-communist-party-of-china/>.
- . 2021. "Divining the Plenum." *Inside Story*. 2021. <https://insidestory.org.au/divining-the-plenum/>.
- Brown, Kerry & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, Una Aleksandra. 2018. "Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping." *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.
- Brunnermeier, Markus; Doshi, Rush; James, Harold. 2018. "Beijing's Bismarckian Ghosts: How Great Powers Compete Economically." *The Washington Quarterly* 41 (3): 161–76.
- Bukharin, Nikolai. 1925. *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology*. New York: International Publishers.



- Burchard, Hans von der. 2019. "EU Slams China as a 'Systemic Rival' as Trade Tension Rises." *POLITICO*. 2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-slams-china-as-systemic-rival-as-trade-tension-rises/>.
- Busch, Andrew E. 1997. "Ronald Reagan and the Defeat of the Soviet Empire." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27 (3).
- Bushmanov, A. Yu; Galstyan, I.A.; Soloviev, V. Yu; Konchalovsky, M.V. 2020. "Lessons for Health Service: The Chernobyl Accident and the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Medical Radiology and Radiation Safety* 65 (3).
- Buzan, Barry. 2014. "The Logic and Contradictions of 'Peaceful Rise/Development' as China's Grand Strategy." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7 (4): 381–420.
- Cabestan, Jean-Pierre. 2017. "China's Institutional Changes in the Foreign and Security Policy Realm Under Xi Jinping: Power Concentration vs. Fragmentation Without Institutionalization." *East Asia*.
- . 2020. "China's Military Base in Djibouti: A Microcosm of China's Growing Competition with the United States and New Bipolarity." *Journal of Contemporary China* 29 (125).
- Cai, Yongwei. 2016. "Professor Shi Yinhong: China's 'Strategic Overdraft' Is Growing Day by Day (时殷弘教授：中国‘战略透支’风险日增)." *Lianhe Zaobao*. 2016. <https://www.zaobao.com.sg/znews/greater-china/story20160921-668655>.
- Callahan, William A. 2008. "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?" *International Studies Review* 10: 749–61.
- . 2015. "History, Tradition and the China Dream: Socialist Modernization in the World of Great Harmony." *Journal of Contemporary China* 24 (96): 983–1001.
- Campbell, Kurt M. 2020. "The Changing China Debate." *Chatham House*. 2020. <https://americas.chathamhouse.org/article/the-changing-china-debate/>.
- Campbell, Kurt M.; Doshi, Rush. 2020. "The Coronavirus Could Reshape Global Order." *Foreign Affairs*. 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-03-18/coronavirus-could-reshape-global-order>.
- Cao, Qing. 2013. "From Revolution to Business: China's Changing Discourses on Africa." In *The Morality of China in Africa: The Middle Kingdom and the Dark Continent*. London: Zed Books.
- Carmody, Pádraig; Taylor, Ian; Zajontz, Tim. 2021. "China's Spatial Fix and 'Debt Diplomacy' in Africa: Constraining Belt or Road to Economic Transformation?" *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*.
- Carr, Andrew. 2018. "It's About Time: Strategy and Temporal Phenomena." *Journal of Strategic Studies*.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. 1970. *Socialism in One Country 1924-1926, Volume One*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Carrai, Maria Adele. 2017. "China's Dream of Great Rejuvenation: Deconstructing Its Historical Myth." *China's World*, no. 2: 13–23.
- . 2019. "China's Malleable Sovereignty Along the Belt and Road Initiative: The Case of the 99-Year Chinese Lease of Hambantota Port." *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 9 (20): 1061–99.
- Carrico, Kevin. 2020. "Seeing Sansha: The Political Aesthetics of a South China Sea Settlement." *Critical Inquiry* 46 (3).
- . 2022. "The Crisis of China Research in An Age of Genocide." *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 12 (2).
- Centeno, Ramón I. 2017. "The Cuban Regime After A Decade of Raúl Castro in Power."

- Mexican Law Review* 9 (2).
- Chan, Alina; Ridley, Matt. 2021. *Viral: The Search for the Origin of COVID-19*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Chan, John. 2012. "China's Red Aristocracy." *World Socialist Web Site*. 2012. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2012/12/31/chin-d31.html>.
- Chan, Seng In; Song, Weiqing. 2020. "Telling the China Story Well: A Discursive Approach to the Analysis of Chinese Foreign Policy in the 'Belt and Road' Initiative." *Chinese Political Science Review* 5.
- Chapoutot, Johann. 2017. *The Cultural Revolution of the Nazis (La Révolution Culturelle Nazie)*. Paris: NRF.
- Charon, Paul. 2021. "Strategic Foresight in China: The Other Missing Dimension." [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief\\_5\\_2021.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_5_2021.pdf).
- Chaudhuri, Debasish. 2022. "A Hundred Years of Entanglement: The Chinese Party-State and Ethnic Minorities." *China Report*.
- Chellaney, Brahma. 2017. "China's Debt-Trap Diplomacy." *Project Syndicate*. 2017. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-one-belt-one-road-loans-debt-by-brahma-chellaney-2017-01?barrier=accesspaylog>.
- Chen, Chi-yun. 2006. "Immanent Human Beings in Transcendent Time: Epistemological Basis of Pristine Chinese Historical Consciousness." In *Notions of Time in Chinese Historical Thinking*, edited by John B. Huang, Chun-chieh; Henderson. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Chen, Dingding; Pu, Xiaoyu; Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2014. "Debating China's Assertiveness." *International Security* 38 (3): 176–83.
- Chen, Dingding; Wang, Jianwei. 2011. "Lying Low No More?: China's New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy." *China: An International Journal* 9 (2): 195–216.
- Chen, Huirong; Greitens, Sheena Chestnut. 2021. "Information Capacity and Social Order: The Local Politics of Information Integration in China." *Governance*.
- Chen, Jian. 2019. "A Flawed Giant: Zhou Enlai and China's Prolonged Rise." *Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics*. 2019. <https://iop.harvard.edu/forum/flawed-giant-zhou-enlai-and-china's-prolonged-rise>.
- Chen, Qiushi. 2020. "Citizen Journalist Chen Qiushi Goes Missing Covering Coronavirus Outbreak in Wuhan." *Bloomberg Quicktake*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J4ddPVcq4Q&ab\\_channel=BloombergQuicktakes3ANow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J4ddPVcq4Q&ab_channel=BloombergQuicktakes3ANow).
- Chen, Simiao; Zhang, Zongjiu; Yang, Juntao; Wang, Jiang; Zhai, Xiaohui; Bärnighausen, Till. 2020. "Fangcang Shelter Hospitals: A Novel Concept for Responding to Public Health Emergencies." *The Lancet* 395 (10232).
- Chestnut Greitens, Sheena. 2020. "Surveillance, Security, and Liberal Democracy in the Post-COVID World." *International Organization*.
- Chestnut, Sheena; Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2009. "Is China Rising?" In *Global Giant: Is China Changing the Rules of the Game?*, edited by Jon Paus, Eva; Prime, Penelope B.; Western, 237–59. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cho, Sungmin. 2020. "The Fang-Shou Cycle in Chinese Politics." In *Hindsight, Insight, Foresight: Thinking about Security in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Alexander L. Vuving. Honolulu: Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. <https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/18-cho-25thA.pdf>.
- Choo, Jaewoo. 2016. "China's Defence Against Post-Unification Korea-US Alliance: Not at Yalu but Taiwan Strait." *East Asia* 33.

- Christensen, Thomas J. 2001. "Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy." *International Security* 25 (4): 5–40.
- Chubb, Andrew. 2021. "PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea: Measuring Continuity and Change, 1970-2015." *International Security* 45 (3).
- Chung, Jae Ho. 2016. *Centrifugal Empire: Central-Location Relations in China*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ci, Jiwei. 2019. *Democracy in China: The Coming Crisis*. Harvard University Press: London.
- CICIR. 2020. "Seven Experts from the Institute of Modern Technology Discuss the 'Novel Corona Virus and the International Pattern.'" *China Institutes of International Studies*. 2020. <http://www.cicir.ac.cn/NEW/opinion.html?id=3c69fdbd-b5e7-47b5-b08a-e4e46571e717>.
- Clark, Christopher. 2021. *Time and Power: Visions of History in German Politics, from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Clarke, Donald C. 2003. "Puzzling Observations in Chinese Law: When Is a Riddle Just a Mistake?" In *Understanding China's Legal System*, edited by C. Stephen Hsu. New York: New York University Press.
- Clarke, Donald; Li, Ling. 2021. "Xi Jinping's Third Road: A Response." *Made in China Journal*. 2021. <https://madeinchinajournal.com/2021/11/03/xi-jinpings-third-road-a-response/>.
- Clarke, Michael. 2020. "Beijing's Pivot West: The Convergence of Innenpolitik and Aussenpolitik on China's 'Belt and Road'?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 29 (123).
- Clarke, Michael; Sussex, Matthew. 2023. "Does Ideology Explain Chinese Policy Today?" *The Washington Quarterly* 46 (3).
- Clift, Charles. 2020. "Coronavirus: Public Health Emergency or Pandemic – Does Timing Matter?" *Chatham House*. 2020. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/coronavirus-public-health-emergency-or-pandemic-does-timing-matter>.
- Clive, John. 1989. *Not by Fact Alone: Essays on the Writing and Reading of History*. London: Collins Harvill.
- Cohen, Stephen F. 1970. "Marxist Theory and Bolshevik Policy: The Case of Bukharin's Historical Materialism." *Political Science Quarterly* 85 (1): 40–60.
- Coker, Christopher. 2019. *The Rise of the Civilizational State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Condon, Roderick. 2020. "The Coronavirus Crisis and the Legitimation Crisis of Neoliberalism." *European Societies* 23 (1).
- Conduit, Dara; Akbarzadeh, Shahram. 2018. "Great Power-Middle Power Dynamics: The Case of China and Iran." *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Cooper, Andrew F. 2017. "Between Hub Status and Parallelism: Examining the G20-BRICS Dynamics in Global Governance." *International Organisations Research Journal* 12 (2): 146–63.
- Coppens, Pascal. 2019. *China's New Normal: Hoe China de Standaard Zet Voor Innovatie (China's New Normal: How China Sets the Standard for Innovation)*. Kalmthout: Pelckmanspro.
- Cornish, Paul. 2013. "Strategic Culture in the United Kingdom." In *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*, edited by Alexandra Biehl, Heiko; Giegerich, Bastian; Jonas, 361–75. New York: Springer.
- Cox, Michael. 2018. "Axis of Opposition: China, Russia, and the West." In *Will China's Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 321–47. Oxford University Press.
- Cox, Robert W. 1996. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International

- Relations Theory (1981).” In *Approaches to World Order*, edited by Timothy J. Cox, Robert; Sinclair, 85–123. Cambridge University Press.
- Crabtree, James. n.d. “The Third Phase of China’s Belt and Road.” *The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Institute for Emerging Market Studies*. Accessed July 28, 2021. <https://iems.ust.hk/publications/policy-briefs/the-third-phase-of-china-s-belt-and-road-initiative-by-james-crabtree>.
- . 2019. “China - The Core Problem.” *Asia Nikkei Review*. 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/China-the-core-problem>.
- Creemers, Rogier. 2020. “Party Ideology and Chinese Law.” In *Law and the Party in China: Ideology and Organisation*, edited by Susan Creemers, Rogier; Trevaskes, 31–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Creemers, Rogier; Trevaskes, Susan. 2021. *Law and the Party in Xi Jinping’s China: Ideology and Organization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CSIS. n.d. “Database.” *Reconnecting Asia*. Accessed September 19, 2019. <https://reconnectingasia.csis.org/database/>.
- Cui, Jue. 2018. “Party Concept and Party Construction of the New Party System of China (中国新型政党制度中的政党概念与政党建设).” *Journal of the Central Institute of Socialism* 5.
- Cui, Tiankai. 2019. “Keynote Speech by Ambassador Cui Tiankai At Vision China Event.” *Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America*. 2019. <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgxss/t1698729.htm>.
- Cui, Zhiyuan. 2003. “‘Xiaokang Socialism’: A Petty-Bourgeois Manifesto.” *The Chinese Economy* 36 (3): 50–70.
- Culver, John; Hass, Ryan. 2021. “Understanding Beijing’s Motives Regarding Taiwan, and America’s Role.” *Brookings*. 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/understanding-beijings-motives-regarding-taiwan-and-americas-role/>.
- Dan, Wang. 2021. “2020 Letter.” *Dangwang.Com*. 2021. <https://danwang.co/2020-letter/>.
- Das, Khagen. 1988. “On ‘Socialism in One Country.’” *Economic and Political Weekly* 23 (25).
- David-Fox, Michael. 1999. “What Is Cultural Revolution?” *The Russian Review* 58 (2).
- Davies, Sara E; Wenham, Clare. 2020. “Why the COVID-19 Response Needs International Relations.” *International Affairs* 96 (5).
- Delahunty, Robert J.; Yoo, John. 2009. “The ‘Bush Doctrine’: Can Preventive War Be Justified?” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 32.
- Deloitte. 2019. “China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Recalibration and New Opportunities.” *Deloitte Insights*. 2019. [https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/cn22846\\_chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/DI\\_Chinas-Belt-and-Road-Initiative.pdf](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/cn22846_chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/DI_Chinas-Belt-and-Road-Initiative.pdf).
- Deng, Yong. 2014. “China: The Post-Responsible Power.” *The Washington Quarterly* 37 (4): 117–32.
- Derian, James der. 1990. “The (S)Pace of International Relations: Simulation, Surveillance, and Speed.” *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (3).
- Denton, Kirk A. 2013. *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Dessein, Axel. 2019. “Identifying Windows of Opportunity within China’s Rise.” *Military Review September*: 68–81. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/September-October-2019/Dessein-China-100-Year/>.
- Dessein, Bart. 2014. “Marxism and the Rise of New Confucianism.” In *Marxism and the*



- Future: The Third Sino-British Bilateral Forum on Marxist Aesthetics*, Proceedings, edited by Jie Wang. Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press.
- . 2017. “The Belt and Road and China’s ‘Tianxia’ Concept.” In *The Collected Works at the Symposium on China Studies 2016*, 84–92.
- . 2019. “‘Pacifism’, and China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ and ‘Peaceful Development.’” In *Pacifism’s Appeal: Ethos, History, Politics*, edited by Barbara Kustermans, Jorg; Sauer, Tom; Lootens, Dominiek; Segaert. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Diamant, Neil J. 2022. *Useful Bullshit: Constitutions in Chinese Politics and Society*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Dibble, Madison. 2020. “Bill Gates Calls Question about Whether China Covered up the Coronavirus a ‘Distraction.’” *Washington Examiner*. 2020. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/bill-gates-calls-question-about-whether-china-covered-up-the-coronavirus-a-distraction>.
- Dickson, Bruce J. 2016. *The Dictator’s Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party’s Strategy for Survival*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dijsselbloem, Jeroen. 2018. “Brussel Ought to Readjust the New Silk Routes Right Now (Brussel Moet Nieuwe Zijderoutes Nú Bijsturen).” *Financieel Dagblad*. 2018. <https://fd.nl/opinie/1273778/brussel-moet-nieuwe-zijderoutes-nu-bijsturen#>.
- Dikötter, Frank. 2019. “The People’s Republic of China Was Born in Chains.” *Foreign Policy*. 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/01/the-peoples-republic-of-china-was-born-in-chains/>.
- Dirlik, Arif. 2014. “Post-Socialism Revisited: Reflections on ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics,’ Its Past, Present, and Future.” In *Ideas, History, and Modern China*, edited by Wang Cao, Tianyu; Zhong, Xueping; Liao, Kebin; Ban, 263–91. Leiden: BRILL Publishers.
- Dittmer, Lowell. 2019. “On the Sixth Generation: Preliminary Speculations about Chinese Politics after Xi.” *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Dittmer, Lowell; Hurst, William. 2002. “Analysis in Limbo: Contemporary Chinese Politics Amid the Maturation of Reform.” *Issues & Studies* 38 (4/39).
- Dixon, Robyn; Su, Alice. 2019. “At 70, Communist China Is Older than the Soviet Union, While Rivaling U.S. Economic Power.” *Los Angeles Times*. 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-09-29/70th-anniversary-personal-experiences>.
- DoD. 2018. “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge.” *U.S. Department of Defense*. 2018. <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.
- . 2022. “DoD Transmits 2022 National Defense Strategy.” *U.S. Department of Defense*. 2022. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2980584/dod-transmits-2022-national-defense-strategy/>.
- Doshi, Rush. 2021. *The Long Game: China’s Grand Strategy to Displace American Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dotson, John. 2020. “The CCP’s New Leading Small Group for Countering the Coronavirus Epidemic—and the Mysterious Absence of Xi Jinping.” *China Brief*. 2020. <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Read-the-02-13-2020-CB-Issue-in-PDF.pdf?x10405>.
- Douroux, Philippe. 2015. “Johann Chapoutot: This Focus on ‘Mein Kampf’ Has the Disadvantage of Encouraging a Hitler-Centric Reading of Nazism.” (Johann Chapoutot :

- «Cette Focalisation Sur ‘Mein Kampf’ a l’inconvénient d’encourager Une Lecture Hitléro-Centriste Du Nazisme»)." *Libération*. 2015. [https://www.liberation.fr/debats/2015/10/26/johann-chapoutot-cette-focalisation-sur-ce-texte-a-l-inconvenient-d-encourager-une-lecture-hitlero-c\\_1409031](https://www.liberation.fr/debats/2015/10/26/johann-chapoutot-cette-focalisation-sur-ce-texte-a-l-inconvenient-d-encourager-une-lecture-hitlero-c_1409031).
- Downer, Alexander. 2020. "China Must Be Held to Account for Unleashing a Global Catastrophe." *Financial Review*. 2020. <https://www.afr.com/policy/foreign-affairs/china-must-be-held-to-account-for-unleashing-a-global-catastrophe-20200419-p5413o>.
- Doyon, Jérôme. 2021. "The Bureaucratisation of Loyalty: The Communist Youth League as a Political Springboard in Post-Mao China." In *The Chinese Communist Party In Transformation: The Crisis Of Identity And Possibility For Renewal*, edited by Lance L.P. Gore. London: World Scientific.
- Dresen, F. Joseph. n.d. "Bureaucrats and Russian Transition: The Politics of Accommodation." *Wilson Center*. Accessed December 7, 2021. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/bureaucrats-and-russian-transition-the-politics-accommodation>.
- Dreyer, June Teufel. 2015. "The ‘Tianxia Trope’: Will Change China the International System?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 24 (96): 1015–31.
- Drezner, Daniel W. 2020. "The Song Remains the Same: International Relations After COVID-19." *International Organization* 74: 1–18.
- . 2021. "Would a Realist Approach to China Have Been Better for the United States?" *The Washington Post*. 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/11/03/would-realist-approach-china-have-been-better-united-states/>.
- Du, Shangze; Liu, Shaohua. 2022. "Responding to the Cave-Dwelling Question (‘窑洞之问’的答卷人)." *People's Daily*. 2022. [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2022-01/14/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20220114\\_3-01.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2022-01/14/nw.D110000renmrb_20220114_3-01.htm).
- Dulles, John Foster. 1952. "Security in the Pacific." *Foreign Affairs* 30 (2).
- Duncombe, Constance; Dunne, Tim. 2018. "After Liberal World Order." *International Affairs* 94 (1): 25–42.
- Dyer, Owen. 2020. "Covid-19: China's President Xi Visits Wuhan amid Confidence That Virus Is Under Control." *The BMJ*. 2020. <https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.m995>.
- Dykmann, Klaas; Bruun, Ole. 2021. "China's Pledge to Civilise ‘All Under Heaven.’" *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*.
- Dyson, Stephen Benedict; Parent, Matthew J. 2017. "The Operational Code Approach to Profiling Political Leaders: Understanding Vladimir Putin." *Intelligence and National Security*.
- Easton, Ian. 2017. *The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia*. Arlington: Project 2049 Institute.
- Economist. 2017. "Pakistan's Misguided Obsession with Infrastructure." *The Economist*, 2017.
- Economy, Elizabeth C. 2018. *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2021. "China's Inconvenient Truth." *Foreign Affairs*. 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-05-28/chinas-inconvenient-truth>.
- Edelstein, David M. 2017. *Over the Horizon: Time, Uncertainty, and the Rise of Great Powers*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 2018. "Cooperation, Uncertainty, and the Rise of China: It's About ‘Time.’" *The Washington Quarterly* 41 (1): 155–71.

- . 2020. “Time and the Rise of China.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 1–31.
- Eden, Lorraine; Lenway, Stefanie; Schuler, Douglas A. 2005. “From the Obsolescing Bargain to the Political Bargaining Model.” In *International Business and Government Relations in the 21st Century*, edited by Robert Grosse, 253–69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eichengreen, Barry. 2018. “The Belt and Road in the Mirror of the Marshall Plan.” *Caixin Global*. 2018. <https://www.caixinglobal.com/2018-11-13/barry-eichengreen-the-belt-and-road-in-the-mirror-of-the-marshall-plan-101346183.html>.
- Emmott, Bill. 2017. *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World’s Most Successful Political Idea*.
- Erickson, Andrew S. 2021. “A Dangerous Decade of Chinese Power Is Here.” *Foreign Policy*. 2021. [https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/10/18/china-danger-military-missile-taiwan/?tpcc=recirc\\_latest062921](https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/10/18/china-danger-military-missile-taiwan/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921).
- . 2023. “Running the Gauntlet: Holding the Line on Taiwan & Beyond through the FYDP of Maximum Danger.” In *SENEDIA DID23 Foreign Challenges - China Session*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsVpGoSZGRE>.
- Escobar, Pepe. 2017. “Xi’s Road Map to the Chinese Dream.” *Asia Times*. 2017. <https://asiatimes.com/2017/10/xis-road-map-chinese-dream/>.
- Esherick, Joseph W. 2022. *Accidental Holy Land: The Communist Revolution in Northwest China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ewing, Blake. 2020. “Conceptual History, Contingency and the Ideological Politics of Time.” *Journal of Political Ideologies*.
- Fang, Songying; Li, Xiaojun; Sun, Fanglu. 2018. “China’s Evolving Motivations and Goals in UN Peacekeeping Participation.” *International Journal* 73 (3): 464–73.
- Fang, Wan. 2018. “How ‘Unconditional’ Is China’s Foreign Aid?” *Deutsche Welle*. 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/how-unconditional-is-chinas-foreign-aid/a-43499703>.
- Fanell, Jim. 2017. “Now Hear This—The Clock Is Ticking in China: The Decade of Concern Has Begun.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*. 2017. <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/october/now-hear-clock-ticking-china-decade-concern-has-begun>.
- Farrell, Matthew. 2020. “The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the COVID-19 Crisis.” *Modern China Studies* 27 (2).
- Fasslabend, Werner. 2015. “The Silk Road: A Political Marketing Concept for World Dominance.” *European View* 14.
- Feigenbaum, Evan A. 2017. “The Big Bet at the Heart of Xi Jinping’s ‘New Deal.’” *Macro Polo*. 2017. <https://macropolo.org/big-bet-heart-xi-jinpings-new-deal/>.
- . 2018. “A Chinese Puzzle: Why Economic ‘Reform’ in Xi’s China Has More Meanings than Market Liberalization.” *Macro Polo*. 2018. <https://macropolo.org/analysis/chinese-puzzle-economic-reform-xis-china-meanings-market-liberalization/>.
- Feldman, Steven P. 2021. *Dictatorship by Degrees: Xi Jinping in China*. London: Lexington Books.
- Fenby, Jonathan. 2017. “Statement Fitted so Neatly with French Revolution.” *Financial Times*. 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/a245c796-8992-11e7-bf50-e1c239b45787>.
- Feng, Huiyun. 2009a. “A Dragon on Defense: Explaining China’s Strategic Culture.” *Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 171–87.
- . 2009b. “Is China a Revisionist Power?” *The Chinese Journal of International*

- Politics* 2 (3): 313–34.
- Feng, Zhang. 2009. “Rethinking the ‘Tribute System’: Broadening the Conceptual Horizon of Historical East Asian Politics.” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2.
- Ferdinand, Peter. 2016. “Westward Ho - The China Dream and ‘One Belt, One Road’: Chinese Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping.” *International Affairs* 92 (4): 941–57.
- Ferguson, Niall. 2015. *Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist*. London: Penguin Books.
- . 2018. “A Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad President Builds an Empire.” *Boston Globe*. 2018. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2018/06/11/terrible-horrible-good-very-bad-president-builds-empire/quXTOXsKAIJIUbHwEnTkOO/story.html>.
- . 2019. “The New Cold War? It’s With China, and It Has Already Begun.” *The New York Times*. 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/02/opinion/china-cold-war.html>.
- Fewsmith, Joseph. 2003. “China’s Response to SARS.” *China Leadership Monitor*. 2003. [https://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/clm7\\_jf.pdf](https://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/clm7_jf.pdf).
- . 2012. “De Tocqueville in Beijing.” *China Leadership Monitor*. 2012. <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM39JF.pdf>.
- . 2021. *Rethinking Chinese Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fewsmith, Joseph; Nathan, Andrew J. 2018. “Authoritarian Resilience Revisited.” *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Fie, Xiaotong. 1992. *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Fingleton, Eamonn. 2012. “The Myth of Japan’s Failure.” *The New York Times*. 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/08/opinion/sunday/the-true-story-of-japans-economic-success.html>.
- Finkel, Evgeny; Gehlbach, Scott. 2018. “The Tocqueville Paradox: When Does Reform Provoke Rebellion?” *SSRN*.
- Finkelstein, David M. 2019. “Breaking the Paradigm: Drivers behind the PLA’s Current Period of Reform.” In *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms*, edited by Joel Saunders, Phillip C.; Ding, Arthur S.; Scobell, Andrew; Yang, Andrew N.D.; Wuthnow. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press.
- Fitzgerald, John. 2021. “Cadre Nation: Territorial Government and the Lessons of Imperial Statecraft in Xi Jinping’s China.” *The China Journal*, no. 85.
- Flage, Roger; Aven, Terje. 2015. “Emerging Risk - Conceptual Definition and a Relation to Black Swan Type of Events.” *Reliability Engineering & System Safety* 144.
- Foot, Rosemary. 2018. “Restraints on Conflict in the China-US Relationship: Contesting Power Transition Theory.” In *Will China’s Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 79–99. Oxford University Press.
- . 2019. “Remembering the Past to Secure the Present: Versailles Legacies in a Resurgent China.” *International Affairs* 95 (1): 143–60.
- Ford, Christopher A. 2015a. *China Looks at the West: Identity, Global Ambitions, and the Future of Sino-American Relations*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- . 2015b. “The Party and the Sage: Communist China’s Use of Quasi-Confucian Rationalizations for One-Party Dictatorship and Imperial Ambition.” *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- . 2016. “Behind the Official Narrative: China’s Strategic Culture in Perspective.” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*. 2016. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/behind-the-official-narrative-chinas-strategic-culture-in-perspective/>.
- Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population*. Edited by Arnold I. Davidson. London: Palgrave Macmillan.



- Fravel, Taylor M. 2018. "Shifts in Warfare and Party Unity: Explaining China's Changes in Military Strategy." *International Security* 42 (3): 37–83.
- . 2019. *Active Defense: China's Military Strategy since 1949*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2020. "China's 'World-Class Military' Ambitions: Origins and Implications." *The Washington Quarterly* 43 (1): 85–99.
- Fravel, Taylor M.; Manion, Melanie; Wang, Yuhua. 2021. "A 'China in the World' Paradigm for Scholarship." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 56.
- Friedman, Jeremy. 2015. *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Friedman Lissner, Rebecca; Rapp-Hooper, Mira. 2018. "The Day after Trump: American Strategy for a New International Order." *The Washington Quarterly* 41 (1): 7–25.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2006. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- Fulda, Andreas. 2016. "The Logic and Limits of the Party's Social Management Approach in Maintaining Stability: Lessons from Bismarck." In *China in the Xi Jinping Era*, edited by Honghua Tsang, Steve; Men, Nottingham, 71–96. Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2020. "International Open Letter against the CCP's Rule by Fear - and Its Accomplices." *European Values*. 2020. <https://www.europeanvalues.net/letter/>.
- Fung, Courtney J. 2018. "Separating Intervention from Regime Change: China's Diplomatic Innovations at the UN Security Council Regarding the Syria Crisis." *The China Quarterly*, 1–20.
- . 2019a. "Providing for Global Security: Implications of China's Combat Troop Deployment to UN Peacekeeping." *Global Governance* 25: 509–34.
- . 2019b. "Rhetorical Adaptation, Normative Resistance and International Order-Making: China's Advancement of the Responsibility to Protect." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 1–23.
- Furstenberg, Saipira; Lemon, Edward; Heathershaw, John. 2021. "Spatialising State Practices through Transnational Repression." *European Journal of International Security*.
- Garcia, Arturo Oropeza. 2014. "The Role of China and the BRICS Project." *Mexican Law Review* 7 (1): 109–36.
- Gallelli, Beatrice. 2020. "A New People's War to Tell China's Story (Una Nuova 'Guerra Di Popolo' per Raccontare La 'Storia Della Cina')." *Sinosfere*. 2020. <https://sinosfere.com/2020/03/28/beatrice-gallelli-una-nuova-guerra-di-popolo-per-raccontare-la-storia-della-cina/>.
- Gandhi, Jennifer; Przeworski, Adam. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (11).
- Gandy, D. Ross. 1979. *Marx & History: From Primitive Society to Communist Future*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Gao, James Zheng. 2004. *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre, 1949-1954*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Gao, Peiyong. 2022. "深刻把握促进共同富裕的基本精神和实践要求（深入学习贯彻习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想）." *People's Daily*. 2022. [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2022-08/23/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20220823\\_1-11.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2022-08/23/nw.D110000renmrb_20220823_1-11.htm).
- Garlick, Jeremy. 2016. "Not So Simple: Complexity Theory and the Rise of China." *China Report* 52 (4): 284–305.
- . 2018. "Deconstructing the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor: Pipe Dreams Versus Geopolitical Realities." *Journal of Contemporary China*.

- . 2019a. “China’s Economic Diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe: A Case of Offensive Mercantilism.” *Europe-Asia Studies*.
- . 2019b. “China’s Principal-Agent Problem in the Czech Republic: The Curious Case of CEFC.” *Asia-Europe Journal*.
- Garnaut, John. 2019. “Engineers of the Soul: What Australia Needs to Know about Ideology in Xi Jinping’s China.” *Sinocism China Newsletter*. 2019. <https://sinocism.com/p/engineers-of-the-soul-ideology-in>.
- Garside, Roger. 2021. *China Coup: The Great Leap to Freedom*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gelpern, Anna; Horn, Sebastian; Morris, Scott; Parks, Brad; Trebesch, Christoph. 2021. “How China Lends: A Rare Look into 100 Debt Contracts with Foreign Governments.” Washington, D.C.
- Ghiselli, Andrea. 2020. *Protecting China’s Interests Overseas: Securitization and Foreign Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2018. “Revising China’s Strategic Culture: Contemporary Cherry-Picking of Ancient Strategic Thought.” *The China Quarterly* 233: 166–85.
- Ghiselli, Andrea; Morgan, Pippa. 2021. “A Turbulent Silk Road: China’s Vulnerable Foreign Policy in the Middle East and North Africa.” *The China Quarterly*.
- Giersch, C. Patterson. 2020. *Corporate Conquests: Business, the State, and the Origins of Ethnic Inequality in Southwest China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gilardoni, Diego. 2017. “Learning from China: Three Lessons for the Ignorant West.” *South China Morning Post*. 2017. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2109172/learning-china-three-lessons-ignorant-west>.
- Gill, Graeme. 1994. *The Collapse of a Single-Party System: The Disintegration of the CPSU*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilley, Bruce. 2004. *China’s Democratic Future: How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gilley, Bruce; Nathan, Andrew. 2003. *China’s New Rulers: The Secret Files*. New York: New York Review Books.
- Gitter, D. & Fang, Leah. 2018. “The Chinese Communist Party’s Use of Homophonous Pen Names: An Open-Source Open Secret.” *Asia Policy* 13 (1): 69–112.
- Glavin, Terry. 2020. “The Coronavirus Pandemic Is the Breakthrough Xi Has Been Waiting For.” *Maclean’s*. 2020. <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/the-coronavirus-pandemic-is-the-breakthrough-xi-jinping-has-been-waiting-for-and-hes-making-his-move/>.
- Goble, Paul. 2017. “Foreword — Decline, Decay and Disintegration: Russia’s Future in the 21st Century.” *The Jamestown Foundation*. 2017. <https://jamestown.org/program/foreword-decline-decay-disintegration-russias-future-21st-century/>.
- Godbole, Avinash. 2017. “The New Principal Contradiction in China: Significance and Possible Outcomes.” *Indian Council of World Affairs Issue Brief*. 2017.
- Gokhale, Vijay. 2021. “What Beijing Wants to Tell the Rest of the World.” *The Indian Express*. 2021. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/what-beijing-wants-to-tell-the-rest-of-the-world-7410971/>.
- Goldgeier, James. 2018. “The Misunderstood Roots of International Order - And Why They Matter Again.” *The Washington Quarterly* 41 (3): 7–20.
- Gonzalez-Vicente, Ruben. 2015. “The Limits to China’s Non-Interference Foreign Policy: Pro-State Interventionism and the Rescaling of Economic Governance.” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 69 (2): 205–23.

- Gore, Charles. 2000. "The Rise and Fall of the Washington Consensus as a Paradigm for Developing Countries." *World Development* 28 (5): 789–804.
- Gore, Lance L.P. 2015. "The Social Transformation of the Chinese Communist Party: Prospects for Authoritarian Accommodation." *Problems of Post-Communism* 62 (4).
- Grant, Andrew. 2018. "China's Double Body: Infrastructure Routes and the Mapping of China's Nation-State and Civilizational State." *Eurasian Geography and Economics*.
- Green, Duncan. 2020. "Covid-19 as a Critical Juncture and the Implications for Advocacy." *Global Policy*.
- Green, Mark. 2019. "China's Debt Diplomacy." *Foreign Policy*. 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/25/chinas-debt-diplomacy/>.
- Greer, Tanner. 2020. "The Belt and Road Strategy Has Backfired on Xi." *Palladium Magazine*. 2020. <https://palladiummag.com/2020/10/24/the-belt-and-road-strategy-has-backfired-on-xi/>.
- Griffiths, Richard T. 2020. *The Maritime Silk Road: China's Belt and Road at Sea*. Leiden: *International Institute for Asian Studies*.
- Groth, Alexander J. 1979. "The Institutional Myth: Huntington's Order Revisited." *The Review of Politics* 41 (2).
- Grünberg, Nis; Drinhausen, Katja. 2019. "The Party Leads on Everything: China's Changing Governance in Xi Jinping's New Era." *MERICs China Monitor*. 2019. <https://merics.org/en/report/party-leads-everything>.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2020. "Consequences of Authoritarian Party Exit and Reinvention for Democratic Competition." *Comparative Political Studies*.
- Guan, Lijie; Ji, Yushan. 2015. "From the Beijing Consensus to the China Model: A Suggested Strategy for Future Economic Reform." *International Critical Thought* 5 (2): 135–47.
- Gunness, Kristen. 2021. "The Dawn of a PLA Expeditionary Force?" *The National Bureau of Asian Research Special Report*. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-dawn-of-a-pla-expeditionary-force/>.
- Guo, Rui. 2020. "Missing Chinese Citizen Journalist Chen Qiushi with Parents under Close Watch." *South China Morning Post*. 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3102757/missing-chinese-citizen-journalist-chen-qiushi-parents-under>.
- Gustafsson, Karl. 2016a. "Recognising Recognition through Thick and Thin: Insights from Sino-Japanese Relations." *Cooperation and Conflict* 51 (3): 255–71.
- . 2016b. "Routinised Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations." *Review of International Studies* 42 (4): 613–33.
- Gvosdev, Nikolas K. 2008. *The Strange Death of Soviet Communism: A Postscript*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Hackenesch, Christine. 2015. "Not as Bad as It Seems: EU and US Democracy Promotion Faces China in Africa." *Democratization* 22 (3).
- Hägerdal, Hans. 1997. "The Orientalism Debate and the Chinese Wall: An Essay on Said and Sinology." *Itinerario* 21 (3).
- Hagström, Linus; Jerdén, Björn. 2014. "East Asia's Power Shift: The Flaws and Hazards of the Debate and How to Avoid Them." *Asian Perspective* 38 (3): 337–62.
- Hall, Stuart. 1992. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." In *Formations of Modernity*, edited by Bram Hall, Stuart; Gieben, 185–226. Polity Press.
- Hall, Todd H. 2020. "I'll Tell You Something about China': Thoughts on the Specialist Study of the International Relations of the People's Republic of China." *St Antony's International Review* 16 (1): 15–21.

- Hameiri, Shahar; Jones, Lee. 2016. "Rising Powers and State Transformation: The Case of China." *European Journal of Political Theory* 22 (1): 72–98.
- Hameiri, Shahar; Jones, Lee; Heathershaw, John. 2019. "Reframing the Rising Powers Debate: State Transformation and Foreign Policy." *Third World Quarterly*.
- Hameiri, Shahar; Jones, Lee; Zou, Yizheng. 2018. "The Development-Insecurity Nexus in China's Near-Abroad: Rethinking Cross-Border Economic Integration in an Era of State Transformation." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*.
- Hamrin, C.L.; Zhao, S. Barnett, A.D. 1995. *Decision-Making in Deng's China: Perspectives from Insiders*. London: Routledge.
- Hansen, Lene. 2006. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London: Routledge.
- Harasymiw, Bohdan. 1969. "Nomenklatura: The Soviet Communist Party's Leadership Recruitment System." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 2 (4).
- Harris, Peter; Trubowitz, Peter. 2021. "The Politics of Power Projection: The Pivot to Asia, Its Failure, and the Future of American Primacy." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*.
- Harvey, David. 2001. "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix.'" *Geographische Revue* 2: 23–30.
- . 2004. "The 'New Imperialism': Accumulation by Dispossession." *Socialist Register* 40.
- Hasegawa, Masanori. 2018. "Close Economic Exchange with a Threatening State: An Awkward Dilemma over China." *Asian Security* 14 (2): 155–71.
- Hatherley, Owen. 2016. "Keep Calm and Carry On – The Sinister Message behind the Slogan That Seduced the Nation." *The Guardian*. 2016.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/08/keep-calm-and-carry-on-posters-austerity-ubiquity-sinister-implications>.
- Hayton, Bill. 2018. "The Modern Creation of China's 'Historic Rights' Claim in the South China Sea." *Asian Affairs* 49 (3).
- He, Alex Jingwei; Shi, Yuda; Liu, Hongdou. 2020. "Crisis Governance, Chinese Style: Distinctive Features of China's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Policy Design and Practice* 3 (3).
- He, Baogang. 2018. "The Domestic Politics of the Belt and Road Initiative and Its Implications." *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- He, Chengxue. 2017. "The New 'Three-Step Strategy' : An Operational Guide for the Realization of the 'Two Stages' ." *China Ethnic News* (中国民族报). 2017.  
[http://www.cssn.cn/mzx/201711/t20171117\\_3745816.shtml?COLLCC=4011156610&](http://www.cssn.cn/mzx/201711/t20171117_3745816.shtml?COLLCC=4011156610&).
- He, Kai; Feng, Huiyun; Chan, Steve; Hu, Weixing. 2021. "Rethinking Revisionism in World Politics." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 14 (2).
- He, Kai; Walker, Stephen. 2015. "Role Bargaining Strategies for China's Peaceful Rise." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 371–88.
- He, Lingnan; Yang, Dali L. 2019. "The Enigma of Political Trust in China: Survey Response Patterns and Preferences for Redistribution." *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 15 (2): 87–104.
- He, Yin. 2019. "China Rising and Its Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping." In *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, edited by Mateja de Coning, Credic; Peter, 253–76. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heang, Chen. 2021. "Would Access to Cambodia's Ream Naval Base Really Benefit China?" *The Diplomat*. 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/would-access-to-cambodias-ream->



[naval-base-really-benefit-china/](#).

- Heath, Timothy R. 2014. *China's New Governing Party Paradigm: Political Renewal and the Pursuit of National Rejuvenation*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Heath, Timothy R.; Grossman, Derek; Clark, Asha. 2021. "China's Quest for Global Primacy." *RAND*. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA447-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA447-1.html).
- Heberer, Thomas. 2016. "The Chinese 'Developmental State 3.0' and the Resilience of Authoritarianism." *Journal of Chinese Governance* 14 (1).
- Heilmann, Sebastian; Perry, Elizabeth J. 2011. *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Heisbourg, François. 2020. "From Wuhan to the World: How the Pandemic Will Reshape Geopolitics." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 62 (3): 7–24.
- Hemmer, Christopher; Katzenstein, Peter J. 2002. "Why Is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism." *International Organization* 56 (3).
- Hendriks, Eric C. 2017. "The Eternal Centre: Why China Is Not a Model to Emulate." *Quadrant* 61 (1/2).
- . 2020. "Quarantaine Is a Different Matter in China than It Is in Europe (Quarantaine in China is andere koek dan in Europa)." *Elsevier Weekblad*. 2020. <https://www.elsevierweekblad.nl/opinie/opinie/2020/02/quarantaine-china-is-andere-koek-dan-europa-739868/>.
- Herbling, David; Li, Dandan. 2019. "China's Built a Railroad to Nowhere in Kenya." *Bloomberg*. 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-07-19/china-s-belt-and-road-leaves-kenya-with-a-railroad-to-nowhere>.
- Hess, Steve. 2016. "Decentralized Meritocracy: Resilience, Decay, and Adaptation in the CCP's Threat-Management System." *Problems of Post-Communism*.
- Heubel, Fabian. 2019. "Beyond Murderous Dialectics: On Paradoxical Thinking and Maoism." *Asian Studies-Azijske Studije* 7 (1): 37–54.
- Hill, Fiona; Gaddy, Clifford G. 2012. *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Hill, Joshua. 2019. *Voting as a Rite: A History of Elections in Modern China*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Hillman, Jonathan E.; Goodman, Matthew P. 2018. "China's 'Belt and Road' Court to Challenge Current US-Led Order." *Financial Times*. 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/b64d7f2e-8f4d-11e8-b639-7680cedcc421>.
- Himmer, Robert. 1994. "The Transition from War Communism to the New Economic Policy: An Analysis of Stalin's Views." *Russian Review* 53 (4): 515–29.
- Hirono, Miwa. 2019. "China's Conflict Mediation and the Durability of the Principle of Non-Interference: The Case of Post-2014 Afghanistan." *The China Quarterly* 239.
- Hoering, Uwe. 2018. *Der Lange Marsch 2.0: Chinas Neue Seidenstraßen Als Entwicklungsmodell (The Long March 2.0: China's New Silk Roads as Development Model)*. Hamburg: VSA Verlag Hamburg.
- Hoffman, Frank G. 2007. "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars." *Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*. [https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac\\_hybridwar\\_0108.pdf](https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf)
- Hofstede, Geert; Bond, Michael Harris. 1988. "The Confucius Connection: From Cultural Roots to Economic Growth." *Organizational Dynamics* 16 (4): 5–21.
- Hofstede, Geert; Minkov, Michael. 2010. "Long- versus Short-Term Orientation: New

- Perspectives.” *Asia Pacific Business Review* 16 (4): 493–504.
- Holbig, Heike. 2018. “Whose New Normal? Framing the Economic Slowdown Under Xi Jinping.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.
- . 2020. “Covid-19 and the Moving Target of a Moderately Prosperous Society.” *Party Watch Annual Report: Covid-19 and Chinese Communist Party Resilience*.  
<https://www.ccpwatch.org/single-post/party-watch-annual-report-2020-covid-19-and-chinese-communist-party-resilience>.
- Holubnychy, Vsevolod. 1964. “Mao Tse-Tung’s Materialistic Dialectics.” *The China Quarterly*, no. 19: 3–37.
- Hom, Andrew R. 2018. “Timing Is Everything: Toward a Better Understanding of Time and International Politics (Theory Note).” *International Studies Quarterly* 62: 69–79.
- Howland, Douglas. 2011. “The Dialectics of Chauvinism: Minority Nationalities and Territorial Sovereignty in Mao Zedong’s New Democracy.” *Modern China* 37 (2).
- . 2012. “Popular Sovereignty and Democratic Socialism in the People’s Republic of China.” *Social Text* 30 (1).
- Hu, Angang; Wei Xing; Yan, Yilong. 2014. *China 2030*. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.
- Hu, Angang; Zhang, Wei. 2017. “How to Understand Contemporary China’s Historical Position (如何认识当今中国的历史方位).” *Journal of East China Normal University Humanities and Social Sciences* (华东师范大学学报), no. 5: 13 – 18.
- Hu, Zhi-hua; Liu, Chan-juan; Lee, Paul Tae-woo. 2020. “China’s Global Investment and Maritime Flows in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative.” *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Huang, Kathy. 2022. “China Is Locked Into Xi Jinping’s Aggressive Diplomacy.” *Foreign Policy*. 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/12/02/china-xi-jinping-aggressive-diplomacy/>.
- Huang, Renwei. 2019. “The Community with a Shared Future for Mankind Resolves the ‘Thucydides Trap’ (人类命运共同体化解‘修昔底德陷阱’).” *Guancha*. 2019. [https://www.guancha.cn/HuangRenWei/2019\\_09\\_08\\_516967\\_2.shtml](https://www.guancha.cn/HuangRenWei/2019_09_08_516967_2.shtml).
- Huang, Yanzhong. 2021. “The Myth of Authoritarian Superiority: China’s Response to COVID-19 Revisited.” *China Leadership Monitor*.
- Huang, Yasheng. 2010. “Debating China’s Economic Growth: The Beijing Consensus or The Washington Consensus.” *Academy of Management Review* 24 (2): 31–47.
- . 2019. “Can the Belt and Road Become a Trap for China?” *Asia Nikkei Review*. 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Can-the-Belt-and-Road-become-a-trap-for-China>.
- Huang, Yue; Zhang, M. 2018. “Promoting the Building of the ‘Belt and Road’ after Five Years (推进‘一带一路’建设工作5周年座谈会).” *Xinhua News*. 2018. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/xxjxs/2018-08/28/c\\_1123341344.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/xxjxs/2018-08/28/c_1123341344.htm).
- Hudson, Alex. 2020. “Does China Have Any Friends Left in the West?” *Newsweek*. 2020. <https://www.newsweek.com/does-china-have-any-friends-left-west-1500231>.
- Hudson Institute. n.d. “Coronavirus Timeline.” *Hudson Institute*. Accessed November 21, 2021. <https://www.hudson.org/features/coronavirus>.
- Hung, Ho-fung. 2020. “Holding Beijing Accountable for the Coronavirus Is Not Racist.” *The Journal of Political Risk* 8 (3).
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. London: Yale University Press.
- . 1970. “Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems.” In *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, edited by

- Clement H. Huntington, Samuel P.; Moore, 3–47. New York: Basic Books.
- . 2007. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Hunzeker, Michael A.; Lanoszka, Alexander. 2018. “A Question of Time: Enhancing Taiwan’s Conventional Deterrence Posture.” *Schar School of Policy and Government - Center for Security Policy Studies at George Mason University*. 2018. <http://csps.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-Question-of-Time.pdf>.
- Huo, Siyi. 2019. “‘The Belt and Road’ in Its Second Stage: An Interview with Zhai Dongsheng, Director of the Belt and Road Construction Promotion Center of the National Development and Reform Commission (‘一带一路’进入第二阶段——专访国家发改委一带一路建设促进中心主任翟东升).” *News Week* (中国新闻周刊). 2019. <http://www.inewsweek.cn/politics/2019-04-25/5633.shtml>.
- Hurley, John; Morris, Scott; Portelance, Gailyn. 2018. “Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective.” *Center for Global Development Policy Paper* 121. 2018. <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/examining-debt-implications-belt-and-road-initiative-policy-perspective.pdf>.
- Hutton, Will. 2008. *The Writing on the Wall: China and the West in the 21st Century*. London: Hachette UK.
- Huyse, Luc. 2014. *Beyond Democracy (De Democratie Voorbij)*. Antwerp: Uitgeverij Van Halewyck.
- Ikenberry, John G.; Etzioni, Amitai. 2011. “Point of Order: Is China More Westphalian Than the West?” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (6): 172–76.
- Ikenberry, John G. 1996. “The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos.” *Foreign Affairs* 75 (3): 79–91.
- . 2012. *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- . 2018a. “A New Order of Things? China, America, and the Struggle over World Order.” In *Will China’s Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 33–55. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2018b. “The End of Liberal International Order?” *International Affairs* 94 (1): 7–23.
- Ishikura, Masao; Jeong, Seongjin; Li, Minqi. 2017. “Introduction: Return of Marxian Macro-Dynamics in East Asia.” In *Return of Marxian Macro-Dynamics in East Asia*, edited by Minqi Ishikura, Masao; Jeong, Seongjin; Li, 1–12. Bingley.
- Izumikawa, Yasuhiro. 2020. “Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia.” *International Security* 45 (2).
- Iwanek, Krzysztosf. 2018. “The New Silk Road Is Old: Why You Should Ignore Belt and Road Initiative Maps.” *The Diplomat*. 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/the-new-silk-road-is-old-why-you-should-ignore-belt-and-road-initiative-maps/>.
- Jackson, Van. 2020. “Understanding Spheres of Influence in International Politics.” *European Journal of International Security* 5.
- . 2023. “Why China Cheered American Relative Decline.” *Un-Diplomatic (Blog)*. 2023. <https://www.un-diplomatic.com/p/why-china-cheered-american-relative>.
- Jacobs, J. Bruce. 2019. “Myth and Reality in Taiwan’s Democratisation.” *Asian Studies Review* 43 (1).
- Jacques, Martin. 2012. *When China Rules The World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World*. London: Penguin Press.
- Jakobsen, Jo. 2006. “Does Democracy Moderate the Obsolescing Bargain Mechanism? - An Empirical Analysis, 1983-2001.” *Transnational Corporations* 15 (3): 65–104.

- Jaworsky, Bernadette Nadya; Qiaoan, Runya. 2020. "The Politics of Blaming: The Narrative Battle between China and the US over COVID-19." *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.
- Jen, Yu-wen. 1975. *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*. London: Yale University Press.
- Jessop, Bob. 2006. "Spatial Fixes, Temporal Fixes, and Spatio-Temporal Fixes." In *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, edited by Derek Castree, Noel; Gregory. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Jiang, Shigong. 2018. "Philosophy and History: Interpreting the 'Xi Jinping Era' through the Party's Nineteenth Party Congress Work Report (哲学与历史 从党的十九大报告解"习近平时代")." *Open Times* (开放时代). 2018.  
<http://www.opentimes.cn/Abstract/8398.html>.
- Jiang, Steven. 2016. "China's Xi Jinping: Reformer in Disguise?" *CNN*. 2016.  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/24/asia/china-xi-jinping-analysis/index.html>.
- Jiang, T.H.; O'Dwyer, Shaun. 2019. "The Universal Ambitions Of China's Illiberal Confucian Scholars." *Palladium Magazine*. 2019.  
<https://palladiummag.com/2019/09/26/the-universal-ambitions-of-chinas-illiberal-confucian-scholars/?fbclid=IwAR2QAV6VVFX2rqa-KSyzH1-lcRm9P5w3z8dUi5vF34cp8ylxF2HOn9pgg3U>.
- Jiang, Yonglin. 2018. "Thinking About 'Ming China' Anew: The Ethnocultural Space in a Diverse Empire — With Special Reference to the 'Miao Territory.'" *Journal of Chinese History* 2.
- Jiang, Zemin. 1993. "Socialism's Future Is Still Bright (社会主义前途依然光明)." *Reform Data*. 1993. <http://www.reformdata.org/1993/1121/5634.shtml>.
- . 1997. "Hold High the Great Banner of the Deng Xiaoping Theory and Push Forward the Cause of Comprehensively Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the 21st Century: Report of Jiang Zemin at the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China." *Ifeng News*. 1997.  
[http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/zhonggong18da/content-4/detail\\_2012\\_11/04/18821363\\_0.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/zhonggong18da/content-4/detail_2012_11/04/18821363_0.shtml).
- . 2006. "Leading Cadres Ought to Firmly Establish a Correct View on Power (领导干部要牢固树立正确的权力观)." In *Selected Writings of Jiang Zemin*, Volume 3 (江泽民文选 第三卷). Beijing: People's Press (人民出版社).
- . 2012. "Full Text of the Speech by Comrade Jiang Zemin for the 16th National Party Congress (江泽民同志在党的十六大上所作报告全文)." *China Daily*. 2012.  
[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/18da/2012-08/28/content\\_15820005.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/18da/2012-08/28/content_15820005.htm).
- Jin, Emily. 2023. "What Is the Deeper Significance of the Phrase 'Leverage the New Security Pattern to Ensure the New Development Pattern?' (以新安全格局保障新发展格局, 深意何在?)." *The Center for Strategic Translation*. 2023.  
<https://www.strategictranslation.org/articles/what-is-the-deeper-significance-of-the-phrase-leverage-the-new-security-pattern-to-ensure-the-new-development-pattern>.
- Johnston, R.; Ross, Robert S. 1999. *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*. Edited by Robert S. Johnston, Alastair Iain; Ross. London: Routledge.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 1998. *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2003. "Is China a Status Quo Power?" *International Security* 27 (4): 5–56.
- . 2013. "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security* 37 (4): 7–48.



- . 2018. “China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing’s International Relations.” *International Security* 44 (2).
- . 2019. “Shaky Foundations: The ‘Intellectual Architecture’ of Trump’s China Policy.” *Global Politics and Strategy* 61 (2): 189–202.
- Johnson, Chalmers A. 1963. *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1937-1945*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, Ian. 2020. “China Bought the West Time. The West Squandered It.” *The New York Times*. 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/opinion/china-response-china.html>.
- Johnson, Matthew D. 2020. “Safeguarding Socialism: The Origins, Evolution and Expansion of China’s Total Security Paradigm.” *Sinopsis: China in Context and Perspective*. 2020. <https://sinopsis.cz/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/safeguarding-socialism.pdf>.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2019. “The Failures of the ‘Failure of Engagement’ with China.” *The Washington Quarterly* 42 (2): 99–114.
- Johnston, Lauren A. 2018. “The Belt and Road Initiative: What Is in It for China?” *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*.
- Johnston, R.; Ross, Robert S. 1999. *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*. Edited by Robert S. Johnston, Alastair Iain; Ross. London: Routledge.
- Jones, Lee; Hameiri, Shahar. 2021. *Fractured China: How State Transformation Is Shaping China’s Rise*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jones, Lee; Zou, Yizheng. 2017. “Rethinking the Role of State-Owned Enterprises in China’s Rise.” *New Political Economy* 22 (6).
- Joniak-Lüthi, Agnieszka. 2015. “Roads in China’s Borderlands: Interfaces of Spatial Representations, Perceptions, Practices, and Knowledges.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 1–23.
- Josse, Paul. 2014. “Becoming a God: Max Weber and the Social Construction of Charisma.” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 14 (3).
- Jowitt, Ken. 1993. *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jowitt, Kenneth. 1975. “Inclusion and Mobilization in European Leninist Regimes.” *World Politics* 28 (1).
- Kacowicz, Arie M.; Miller, Benjamin. 2018. “The Problem of Peaceful Change Revisited: From the End of the Cold War to the Uncertainties of a Post-Liberal Order.” *International Studies Review* 20: 301–8.
- Kalain, R. 1984. “Mao Tse Tung’s ‘Bukharinist’ Phase.” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 14 (2): 147–55.
- Kalinovsky, Artemy. 2011. *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Kang, David. 2020. “Thought Games about China.” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 20 (2).
- Kang, David C. 2019. “International Order in Historical East Asia: Tribute and Hierarchy Beyond Sinocentrism and Eurocentrism.” *International Organization* 74 (1).
- Kang, Yi. 2019. “Dispersed Domination through Patron-Clientelism: The Evolution of the Local State–NGO Relationship in Post-Disaster Sichuan.” *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Kania, Elsa B. 2018. “Beyond Cold War: Paradigms for U.S.-China Strategic Competition.” *Texas National Security Review*. 2018. <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-are-the-united-states-and-china-in-a-new-cold-war/>.
- . 2019. “The ‘Regime Security Dilemma’ in US-China Relations.” *ASPI Strategist*. 2019. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-regime-security-dilemma-in-us-china-relations/>.

- Kastner, Scott L.; Pearson, Margaret M. 2021. "Exploring the Parameters of China's Economic Influence." *Studies in Comparative International Development*.
- Kastner, Scott L.; Saunders, Phillip C. 2011. "Is China a Status Quo or Revisionist State? Leadership Travel as an Empirical Indicator of Foreign Policy Priorities." *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (1).
- Kataoka, Tetsuya. 1974. *Resistance and Revolution in China: The Communists and the Second United Front*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kato, Yayoi. 2021. "Two Faces of Ideology: Double-Edged Functions of Ideology in the Reform Discourse under Xi Jinping." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 49 (2).
- Katzenstein, Peter J. 2018. "The Second Coming? Reflections on a Global Theory of International Relations." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 1–18.
- Kaufman, Alison Adcock. 2010. "The 'Century of Humiliation,' Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order." *Pacific Focus* 25 (1): 1–33.
- Kauppi, Mark V. 1995. "Thucydides: Character and Capabilities." *Security Studies* 5 (2): 142–68.
- Kawashima, Shin. 2019. "Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Philosophy and Vision for International Order: Continuity and Change from the Hu Jintao Era." *Asia-Pacific Review* 26 (1): 121–45.
- Kenderdine, Tristan. 2018. "Death of the East Asian Goose and the Rise of China's Geoindustrial Policy." *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.
- . 2021. "Is Institutionalism Still Useful in Elite China Political Analyses?" *The Diplomat*. 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/is-institutionalism-still-useful-in-elite-china-political-analyses/>.
- Kenderdine, Tristan; Ling, Han. 2018. "International Capacity Cooperation—Financing China's Export of Industrial Overcapacity." *Global Policy* 9 (1): 41–52.
- Kennedy, Paul. 1988. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Kershaw, Ian. 2008. "'Working Towards the Führer.' Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship." *Contemporary European History* 2 (2).
- Khan, Sulmaan Wasif. 2018. *Haunted by Chaos: China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*. Harvard University Press.
- Kilby, Christopher; McWhirter, Carolyn. 2021. "The World Bank COVID-19 Response: Politics as Usual?" *The Review of International Organizations*.
- Kim, Woosang; Gates, Scott. 2015. "Power Transition Theory and the Rise of China." *International Area Studies Review* 18 (3): 219–26.
- King, Cheng; Du, Jane. 2018. "Could 'Belt and Road' Be the Last Step in China's Asian Economic Integration?" *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Kirby, William C. 2006. "China's Internationalization in the Early People's Republic: Dreams of a Socialist World Economy." *The China Quarterly*, 870–90.
- Kirk, Jessica; McDonald, Matt. 2021. "The Politics of Exceptionalism: Securitization and COVID-19." *Global Studies Quarterly* 1 (3).
- Kisro-Warnecke, Diana. n.d. "Future Is History: Die Lehren Aus Chinas Zeitverständnis (Future Is History: The Lessons from China's Understanding of Time)." *Zukunfts Institut*. Accessed August 11, 2019. <https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de/artikel/china/future-is-history-lehren-aus-chinas-zeitvestaednis/>.
- Kissinger, Henry. 2001. *Does America Need A Foreign Policy? Toward A Diplomacy for the 21st Century*. London: Simon & Schuster UK.
- Klotzbücher, Sascha; Kraushaar, Frank; Lycas, Alexis; Suhadolnik, Nataša Vampelj. 2020.

- “View of Censorship and Self-Censorship in Chinese Contexts.” *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 1.
- Knight, Amy. 2003. “The KGB, Perestroika, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5 (1).
- Kong, Vaesna; Cochrane, Steven G.; Meighan, Brendan; Walsh, Matthew. 2019. “The Belt and Road Initiative—Six Years On.” *Moody’s Analytics*. 2019.  
<https://www.moodyanalytics.com/-/media/article/2019/belt-and-road-initiative.pdf>.
- Korolev, Alexander. 2017. “De-Ideologized Mass Line, Regime Responsiveness, and State-Society Relations.” *China Review* 17 (2).
- Koss, Daniel. 2018. *Where the Party Rules: The Rank and File of China’s Communist State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kotkin, Stephen. 2020. “What Comes After the Communist Party in China?” *YouTube - Foreign Policy Research Institute*. 2020.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV7PuqIMozI&t=492s&ab\\_channel=ForeignPolicyResearchInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV7PuqIMozI&t=492s&ab_channel=ForeignPolicyResearchInstitute).
- . 2023. “‘You Can’t Be Half Communist, Just Like You Can’t Be Half Pregnant.’” *China Heritage*. 2023. <https://chinaheritage.net/journal/you-can-get-here-from-there-soviet-historian-stephen-kotkin-on-xi-jinpings-china/>.
- Kozul-Wright, Richard; Poon, Daniel. 2019. “China’s Belt and Road Isn’t Like the Marshall Plan, but Beijing Can Still Learn From It.” *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*. 2019. <https://unctad.org/news/chinas-belt-and-road-isnt-marshall-plan-beijing-can-still-learn-it>.
- Krauthammer, Charles. 1990. “The Unipolar Moment.” *Foreign Affairs* 70 (1).
- Krickovic, Andrej. 2017. “The Symbiotic China-Russia Partnership: Cautious Riser and Desperate Challenger.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 299–329.
- Krickovic, Andrej; Zhang, Chang. 2020. “Fears of Falling Short versus Anxieties of Decline: Explaining Russia and China’s Approach to Status-Seeking.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 13 (2).
- Kristof, Nicholas. 2018. “Notable & Quotable: Xi Jinping—Reformer?” *The Wall Street Journal*. 2018. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/notable-quotable-xi-jinpingreformer-1519689393>.
- Kuik, Cheng-chwee. 2008. “The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore’s Response to a Rising China.” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30 (2): 159–85.
- . 2016. “How Do Weaker States Hedge? Unpacking ASEAN States’ Alignment Behavior towards China.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25 (100): 500–514.
- Kuo, Lily. 2020a. “More Surveillance, Tighter Controls: China’s Coronavirus Crackdown.” *The Guardian*. 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/03/more-surveillance-tighter-controls-chinas-coronavirus-crackdown>.
- . 2020b. “Taking Credit, Avoiding Blame? Xi Jinping’s Absence from Coronavirus Frontline.” *The Guardian*. 2020.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/04/blame-xi-jinping-absence-coronavirus-frontline-china-crisis>.
- . 2020c. “Xi Jinping Visits Wuhan for First Time since Coronavirus Outbreak Began.” *The Guardian*. 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/10/xi-jinping-visits-wuhan-for-first-time-since-coronavirus-outbreak-began>.
- Kwong, Luke S.K. 2015. “What’s in a Name: Zhongguo (Or ‘Middle Kingdom’) Reconsidered.” *The Historical Journal* 58 (3).
- Ládány, László. 2018. *The Communist Party of China and Marxism, 1921-1985: A Self-*

- Portrait*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Lai, Jimmy. 2020. "China's Face of Stability." *The Wall Street Journal*. 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-facade-of-stability-11582156842>.
- Lambach, Daniel. 2022. "Space, Scale, and Global Politics: Towards a Critical Approach to Space in International Relations." *Review of International Studies* 48 (2).
- Lam, Willy Wo-Lap. 2019. "Xi Jinping Evokes the 'Original Aspirations' of the Communist Party— While Seeking to Further Consolidate His Hold on Power." *China Brief* 19 (14): 7–11.
- Lampton, David M. 2014. *Following the Leader: Ruling China, From Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Lancaric, Eugene. 2014. "Gramsci's Critique of Bukharin's Historical Materialism." *New School for Social Research*. 2014. [https://www.academia.edu/12589752/Gramscis\\_Critique\\_of\\_Bukharins\\_Historical\\_Materialism](https://www.academia.edu/12589752/Gramscis_Critique_of_Bukharins_Historical_Materialism).
- Lane, Charles. 2018. "We Got China Wrong. Now What?" *The Washington Post*. 2018. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-got-china-wrong-now-what/2018/02/28/39e61c0e-1caa-11e8-ae5a-16e60e4605f3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-got-china-wrong-now-what/2018/02/28/39e61c0e-1caa-11e8-ae5a-16e60e4605f3_story.html).
- Lanteigne, Marc. 2008. "China's Maritime Security and the 'Malacca Dilemma.'" *Asian Security* 4 (2).
- Lanza, Fabio. 2022. "Always Already and Never Yet: Does China Even Have a Present?" *Modern Intellectual History*.
- Larmer, Brook. 2017. "What the World's Emptiest International Airport Says about China's Influence." *The New York Times Magazine*. 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/magazine/what-the-worlds-emptiest-international-airport-says-about-chinas-influence.html>.
- Larson, Deborah Welch. 2015. "Will China Be a New Type of Great Power?" *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 323–48.
- Lawder, David. 2019. "World Bank Adopts \$1 Billion-plus Annual China Lending Plan over U.S. Objections." *Reuters*. 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-worldbank-china/world-bank-adopts-1-billion-plus-annual-china-lending-plan-over-u-s-objections-idUSKBN1YA038>.
- Lawrence, Patrick. 2018. "How China Is Building the Post-Western World." *The Nation*. 2018. <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-china-is-building-the-post-western-world/>.
- Lawrence, Robert M. 2005. "The Preventive/Preemptive War Doctrine Cannot Justify the Iraq War." *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* 33 (16).
- Layne, Christopher. 2018. "The Sound of Distant Thunder: The Pre-World War I Anglo-German Rivalry as a Model for Sino-American Relations in the Early Twenty-First Century." In *Will China's Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 123–42. Oxford University Press.
- Lazar, Nomi Claire. 2019. *Out of Joint: Power, Crisis and the Rhetoric of Time*. London: Yale University Press.
- Lebow, Richard N. 2010. *Why Nations Fight*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lebow, Richard N.; Stein, Janice Gross. 1995. *We All Lost the Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lebow, Richard N.; Valentino, B. 2009. "Lost in Transition: A Critical Analysis of Power Transition Theory." *International Relations* 23 (3): 389–410.
- Lee, Gregory. 2015. "Fooling the World or Fooling Itself: China's Spectacular-Oneiric Society: An Intervention from a Critical Chinese Studies Perspective." *Proceedings of*



- the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop. 2015.  
[https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/media/pdf/books/978-88-6969-210-9/978-88-6969-210-9-ch-07\\_Xqxhg0A.pdf](https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/media/pdf/books/978-88-6969-210-9/978-88-6969-210-9-ch-07_Xqxhg0A.pdf).
- . 2023. “Narrating and Displaying China and Chineseness: White Dominance, White Saviourism and Decoloniality.” *Postcolonial Politics*. 2023.  
<https://postcolonialpolitics.org/narrating-and-displaying-china-and-chineseness-white-dominance-white-saviourism-and-decoloniality/>.
- Lee, Ji-young. 2014. “Historicizing China’s Rise and International Relations of East Asia.” *EAI Fellows Program Working Paper*, no. 47  
[http://eai.or.kr/data/bbs/eng\\_report/2015011417531873.pdf](http://eai.or.kr/data/bbs/eng_report/2015011417531873.pdf)
- Lee, John. 2019. “China’s Economic Slowdown: Root Causes, Beijing’s Response and Strategic Implications for the US and Allies.” Washington, D.C.
- Lee, Sangkuk. 2017. “An Institutional Analysis of Xi Jinping’s Centralization of Power.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26 (105): 325–36.
- Lee, Yee. 2020. “What Is the Truth? (事實是甚麼?).” Apple Daily. 2020.  
[https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/20200416/HQRH2MZRY2MULHNWFQDAMKS\\_FYE/?fbclid=IwAR3T8O-BItBK4jVJprKUUp2\\_Pzw54vh4wGeqNiLJYzuFSQ8dKosbRoedsjk4](https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/20200416/HQRH2MZRY2MULHNWFQDAMKS_FYE/?fbclid=IwAR3T8O-BItBK4jVJprKUUp2_Pzw54vh4wGeqNiLJYzuFSQ8dKosbRoedsjk4).
- Lee, Yoonkyung. 2014. “Diverging Patterns of Democratic Representation in Korea and Taiwan: Political Parties and Social Movements.” *Asian Security* 54 (3): 419–44.
- Leffler, Melvyn P. 2020. “Avoiding Another Cold War.” *China International Strategy Review*.
- Lei, Qian. n.d. “Policy Friction: An Explanation of Policy Implementation Deviation in China.” *International Public Policy Association*.
- Lelle, Nikolas. 2022. *Labour, Service, and Leadership: National Socialism and Its Legacy (Arbeit, Dienst Und Führung: Der Nationalsozialismus Und Sein Erbe)*. Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag.
- Lemaître, Frédéric. 2021. “Xi Jinping’s Shift to the Left Reveals Fears of China’s Westernisation (Le Virage à Gauche de Xi Jinping Révèle La Crainte d’une Occidentalisation de La Chine).” *Le Monde*. 2021.  
[https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2021/09/07/le-virage-a-gauche-de-xi-jinping-revele-la-crainte-d-une-occidentalisation-de-la-chine\\_6093671\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2021/09/07/le-virage-a-gauche-de-xi-jinping-revele-la-crainte-d-une-occidentalisation-de-la-chine_6093671_3232.html).
- Leonard, Mark. 2012. “China 3.0.” 2012. [https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR66\\_CHINA\\_30\\_final.pdf](https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR66_CHINA_30_final.pdf).
- Leoni, Zeno. 2020. “The End of the ‘Golden Era’? What COVID-19 Means for UK-China Relations.” *King’s College London Blog*. 2020. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/the-end-of-the-goldern-era-what-covid-19-means-for-uk-china-relations>.
- Leverett, Flynt; Wu, Bingbing. 2016. “The New Silk Road and China’s Evolving Grand Strategy.” *The China Journal* 14: 110–32.
- Levett, Jeffrey. 2020. “Chinese Chernobyl, American Waterloo, Russian Borodino.” *Economy & Politics*. 2020. <https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/62368-chinese-chernobyl-american-waterloo-russian-borodino>.
- Levitsky, Steven R.; Way, Lucan A. 2012. “Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (4).
- Levy, David M.; Peart, Sandra J. 2006. “The Fragility of A Discipline When a Model Has Monopoly Status.” *The Review of Austrian Economics* 19: 125–36.
- Levy, Jack S. 1987. “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War.” *World Politics* 40 (1): 82–107.

- Lewin, Arie Y.; Kenney, Martin; Murmann, Johann Peter. 2013. "China's Innovation Challenge: An Introduction." In *China's Innovation Challenge: Overcoming the Middle-Income Trap*, edited by Johann Peter Lewin, Arie Y.; Kenney, Martin; Murmann, 1–31. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewin, Arie Y., ed. 2013. *China's Innovation Challenge: Overcoming the Middle-Income Trap*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewin, Moshe. 1996. "Soviet Bureaucracy in Historical Perspective." Washington, D.C. <https://www.ucis.pitt.edu/nceer/1996-810-13-Lewin.pdf>.
- Leys, Simon. 1990. "The Art of Interpreting Nonexistent Inscriptions Written in Invisible Ink on a Blank Page." *ChinaFile*. 1990. <http://www.chinafile.com/library/nyrb-china-archive/art-interpreting-nonexistent-inscriptions-written-invisible-ink-blank>.
- . 1998. *Essais Sur La Chine (Essays On China)*. Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont.
- Li, Cheng. 2016. *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.
- Li, Ling. 2021. "The Third Road: Where Will Xi Jinping Go in 2022?" *Made in China Journal*. 2021. <https://madeinchinajournal.com/2021/11/01/the-third-road-where-will-xi-jinping-go-in-2022/>.
- Li, Shaomin. 2022. *The Rise of China, Inc. How the Chinese Communist Party Transformed China into a Giant Corporation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li, Zhongjie. 2019. *The Road of the Republic: A Panoramic Overview of the People's Republic of China* (共和国之路 中华人民共和国全景通鉴). Beijing: Central Party School Press (中共中央党校出版社).
- Liao, Wang. 2015. "To Realise the Chinese Dream, It Is Necessary to Walk the Chinese Path (实现中国梦必须走中国道路)." *Xinhua*. 2015. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-01/06/c\\_127363503.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-01/06/c_127363503.htm).
- Lieberthal, Kenneth; Oksenberg, Michel. 1988. *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lim, Darren J., & Cooper, Zack. 2015. "Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia." *Security Studies* 24 (4): 696–727.
- Lim, Darren J.; Mukherjee, Rohan. 2017. "What Money Can't Buy: The Security Externalities of Chinese Economic Statecraft in Post-War Sri Lanka." *Asian Security*.
- Lim, Kean Fan. 2014. "'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics': Uneven Development, Variegated Neoliberalization and the Dialectical Differentiation of State Spatiality." *Progress in Human Geography* 38 (2): 221–47.
- Lim, Yves-Heng. 2018. "The Future Instability of Cross-Strait Relations: Prospect Theory and Ma Ying-Jeou's Paradoxical Legacy." *Asian Security* 14 (3).
- Lin, Chun. 2006. *The Transformation of Chinese Socialism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Lin, Kun-chin. 2020. "Does China Pose a Moral Hazard in the International Society?" *Centre for Geopolitics*. 2020. <https://centreforgeopolitics.org/does-the-coronavirus-pandemic-prove-that-china-poses-a-moral-hazard-for-international-society/>.
- Lin, Justin Yifu. 2018. "China's Rise and Opportunity for Structural Transformation in Africa." *Journal of African Economies* 27 (AERC Supplement 1): 15–28.
- Lin, Syaru Shirley. 2016. *Taiwan's China Dilemma: Contested Identities and Multiple Interests in Taiwan's Cross-Strait Economic Policy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Linz, Juan J.; Stepan, Alfred. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lipsky, Phillip Y. 2020. "COVID-19 and the Politics of Crisis." *International Organization*

- Liu, Hong; Wang, Ting-yan. 2018. "China and the 'Singapore Model': Perspectives from Mid-Level Cadres and Implications for Transnational Knowledge Transfer." *The China Quarterly*, 1–24.
- Liu, Feng. 2020. "The Recalibration of Chinese Assertiveness: China's Responses to the Indo-Pacific Challenge." *International Affairs* 96 (1): 9–27.
- Liu, Jianfei. 2019. "China's Foreign Policy in the New Era Requires Both Taoguang Yanghui and Fenfa Youwei (新时代中国外交既需韬光养晦也要奋发有为)." 2019. [https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/B0hwB2\\_AhhDOES31V7StQw](https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/B0hwB2_AhhDOES31V7StQw).
- Liu, John Zhuang; Zhang, Angela Huyue. 2019. "Ownership and Political Control: Evidence from Charter Amendments." *International Review of Law and Economics* 60.
- Liu, Xiaofeng; Bennett, Mia M. 2020. "Viral Borders: COVID-19's Effects on Securitization, Surveillance, and Identity in Mainland China and Hong Kong." *Dialogues in Human Geography*.
- Liu, Xin. 2021. "Towards a Confucian Geopolitics: A Critical Remark." *Dialogues in Human Geography*.
- Liu, Zehua. 2015. "Political and Intellectual Authority: The Concept of the 'Sage-Monarch' and Its Modern Fate." In *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, edited by Martin Pines, Yuri; Goldin, Paul R.; Kern. Leiden: BRILL.
- Liu, Zhenmin. 2014. "Following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and Jointly Building a Community of Common Destiny." *Chinese Journal of International Law* 13 (3).
- Lo, Chi. 2017. *Demystifying China's Mega Trends: The Driving Forces That Will Shake Up China and the World*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing.
- Long, Zhen-bang; Yuan, Guo-yong. 2020. "The Origins of the Great Epidemic [Lay] in Wuhan: The Lessons of Seventeen Years [Ago] Are Forgotten (大流行緣起武漢 十七年教訓盡忘)." *Mingpao*. 2020. [https://news.mingpao.com/ins/文摘/article/20200318/s00022/1584457829823/大流行緣起武漢-十七年教訓盡忘\(文-龍振邦-袁國勇\)](https://news.mingpao.com/ins/文摘/article/20200318/s00022/1584457829823/大流行緣起武漢-十七年教訓盡忘(文-龍振邦-袁國勇)).
- Lostumbo, Michael J.; McNerney, Michael J.; Peltz, Eric; Eaton, Derek; Frelinger, David R.; Greenfield, Victoria A.; Halliday, John; Mills, Patrick; Nardulli, Bruce R.; Pettyjohn, Stacie L.; Sollinger, Jerry M.; Worman, Stephen M. 2013. "Overseas Basing of U.S. Military Forces: An Assessment of Relative Costs and Strategic Benefits." [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR200/RR201/RAND\\_RR201.sum.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR201/RAND_RR201.sum.pdf).
- Lu, Hui. 2019. "Full Text: China's National Defense in the New Era." *Xinhua News*. 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/24/c\\_138253389.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/24/c_138253389.htm).
- Lukacs, John. 2011. *The Future of History*. London: Yale University Press.
- Luo, Guanzhong. 2014. *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*. Los Angeles: Foreign Languages Press/University of California Press.
- Lüthi, Lorenz M. 2008. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Maçães, Bruno. 2018a. *Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order*. London: Hurst & Company.
- . 2018b. *The Dawn of Eurasia: On the Trail of the New World Order*. Allen Lane.
- Magness, Phillip W. 2020. "The Soviet Economy Was Not Growing; It Was Dying." *American Institute for Economic Research*. 2020. <https://www.aier.org/article/the-soviet-economy-was-not-growing-it-was-dying/>.

- Magnus, George. 2018. *Red Flags: Why Xi's China Is in Jeopardy*. London: Yale University Press.
- . 2019. "China in the 2020s: A More Difficult Decade?" *LSE IDEAS Strategic Update*. 2019. <https://medium.com/@lseideas/china-in-the-2020s-a-more-difficult-decade-f1dfe2504b0f>.
- . 2020. "Has Covid Helped or Hindered the Inevitable Rise of China?" *Capx*. 2020. <https://capx.co/has-covid-helped-or-hindered-the-inevitable-rise-of-china/>.
- . 2021. "Is China's Economic Rise Sustainable?" *SOAS China Institute Blog*. 2021. <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/china-institute/2021/05/19/is-chinas-economic-rise-sustainable/>.
- Mahbubani, Kishore. 2018. "China's Long-Term Strategy for Becoming the World's Number One Power." *The Security Times*. 2018. <http://www.the-security-times.com/chinas-long-term-strategy-for-becoming-the-worlds-number-one-power/>.
- . 2018. *Has the West Lost It? A Provocation*. London: Allen Lane.
- . 2020. "Kishore Mahbubani on the Dawn of the Asian Century." *The Economist*. 2020. [https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2020/04/20/kishore-mahbubani-on-the-dawn-of-the-asian-century?fsrc=scn%2Ffb%2Fte%2Fbl%2Fed%2Ftheworldaftercovid19byinvitationkishoremahbubaniopenfuture&fbclid=IwAR2YJWGvECXySM7kP9p\\_0vlyz5-IoqxMFwuY4\\_rGab11WGWEIK1DSa](https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2020/04/20/kishore-mahbubani-on-the-dawn-of-the-asian-century?fsrc=scn%2Ffb%2Fte%2Fbl%2Fed%2Ftheworldaftercovid19byinvitationkishoremahbubaniopenfuture&fbclid=IwAR2YJWGvECXySM7kP9p_0vlyz5-IoqxMFwuY4_rGab11WGWEIK1DSa).
- Malesky, Edmund J. 2021. "Enhancing Research on Authoritarian Regimes through Detailed Comparison of China and Vietnam." *Problems of Post-Communism* 68 (3).
- Mao, Zedong. 1937a. "On Contradiction (矛盾论)." *Marxists.Org*. 1937.
- . 1937b. "On Practice: On the Relation between Knowledge and Practice, between Knowing and Doing (实践论: 论认识和实践的关系——知和行的关系)." *Marxists.Org*. 1937. [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_16.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_16.htm).
- . 1939. "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party (中国革命与中国共产党)." *Marxists.Org*. 1939. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-193912aa.htm>.
- . 1955a. "Notes from the Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside (中国农村的社会主义高潮的按语)." *Marxists.Org*. 1955. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-195509a.htm>.
- . 1955b. "The Debate on the Co-Operative Transformation of Agriculture and the Current Class Struggle (农业合作化的一场辩论和当前的阶级斗争)." *Marxists.Org*. 1955. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19551011.htm>.
- . 1956a. "On the Ten Great Relationships (论十大关系)." *Marxists.Org*. 1956. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19560425.htm>.
- . 1956b. "Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions (增强党的团结, 继承党的传统)." *Marxists.Org*. 1956. <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19560830.htm>.
- . 1957. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题)." *Marxists.Org*. 1957. [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5\\_58.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_58.htm).
- . 1958. "The Second Speech at the Second Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress (在



- 八大二次会议上的讲话（二）。” *Marxists.Org*. 1958.  
<https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/1968/4-030.htm>.
- Mardell, Jacob. 2017. “The ‘Community of Common Destiny’ in Xi Jinping’s New Era.” *The Diplomat*. 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/the-community-of-common-destiny-in-xi-jinpings-new-era/>.
- . 2018. “Foreign Aid With Chinese Characteristics.” *The Diplomat*. 2018.  
<https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/foreign-aid-with-chinese-characteristics/>.
- Marlow, Ian. 2018. “Sri Lanka’s \$1 Billion White Elephant.” *Bloomberg*. 2018.  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-17/china-s-1-billion-white-elephant-the-port-ships-don-t-use>.
- Marston, Hunter; Bruce, Thomas. 2020. “Hedging, Over Commitment, and the Escalating Risk of Conflict in Southeast Asia.” *The Diplomat*. 2020.  
<https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/hedging-over-commitment-and-the-escalating-risk-of-conflict-in-southeast-asia/>.
- Marx, Karl. 1875. “Critique of the Gotha Programme.” *Marxists.Org*. 1875.  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/>.
- Marysse, Stefaan; Geenen, Sara. 2009. “Win-Win or Unequal Exchange? The Case of the Sino-Congolese Cooperation Agreements.” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47 (3): 371–96.
- Matten, Marc Andre. n.d. “Struggling against Historical Nihilism in Historiography— An Introduction to a Contemporary Campaign the People’s Republic of China.”  
<https://www.writing-history-with-china.phil.fau.de/files/2021/09/historical-nihilism-in-contemporary-china-preprint.pdf>.
- Mattingly, Daniel C. 2021. “How the Party Commands the Gun: The Foreign-Domestic Threat Dilemma in China.”  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51cdc7e5e4b0d7474642bcb0/t/60f8809a47dddc167f011a3e/1626898586392/Mattingly\\_PLA\\_Paper.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51cdc7e5e4b0d7474642bcb0/t/60f8809a47dddc167f011a3e/1626898586392/Mattingly_PLA_Paper.pdf).
- Mattlin, Mikael. 2011. *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan’s One-Party Legacy*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
- Mazarr, Michael J. 2015. *Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict*. United States Army War College Press.
- McCormick, Jim. 2020. “Covid Crisis Has Accelerated Big Trends in China’s Favour.” *Financial Times*. 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/696d0406-181c-4972-a158-06b610f50dbd>.
- McCourt, David M. 2021. “Framing China’s Rise in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom.” *International Affairs*.
- McGregor, Richard. 2019. *Xi Jinping: The Backlash*. London: Penguin Press.
- . n.d. “China’s Deep State: The Communist Party and the Coronavirus.” *Lowy Institute*. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/china-s-deep-state-communist-party-coronavirus>
- McMahon, Dinny. 2018. *China’s Great Wall of Debt: Shadow Banks, Ghost Cities, Massive Loans and the End of the Chinese Miracle*. London: Hachette UK.
- McNally, Mark. 2011. “Revisiting the Gramsci–Bukharin Relationship: Neglected Symmetries.” *European Ideas* 37 (3): 365–75.
- Meisner, Maurice. 1999. “The Significance of the Chinese Revolution in World History.”  
[https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21309/1/Significance\\_of\\_the\\_Chinese\\_Revolution\\_in\\_world\\_history.pdf](https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21309/1/Significance_of_the_Chinese_Revolution_in_world_history.pdf)
- . 2007. “The Place of Communism in Chinese History: Reflection on the Past and

- Future of the People's Republic of China." *Macalester International* 18 (8).
- Meisner, Mitch. 1978. "Dazhai: The Mass Line in Practice." *Modern China* 4 (1).
- Merics. 2018. "China Creates a Global Infrastructure Network: Interactive Map of the Belt and Road Initiative." *Mercator Institute for China Studies*. 2018.  
<https://www.merics.org/en/bri-tracker/interactive-map>.
- Mertha, Andrew. 2009. "'Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0': Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process." *The China Quarterly* 200: 995–1012.
- Mervart, David. 2015. "La Importancia de Ser Zhongguo." *Revista de Occidente* 414.
- . 2016. "The Point of the Centre: Present and Past Discourses of China-Hood (La Cuestión Del Centro: Discursos Presentes y Pasados de La Sinitud)." *Araucaria: Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política, Humanidades y Relaciones Internacionales* 18 (35).
- Michta, Andrew A. 2018. "The Revenge of Hard Power Politics." *The American Interest*. 2018. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/10/16/the-revenge-of-hard-power-politics/>.
- . 2021. "Russia and China's Dangerous Decline." *Wall Street Journal*. 2021.  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-and-china-dangerous-population-decline-indo-pacific-pivot-research-development-taiwan-ukraine-11639497466>.
- Middelaar, Luuk; van der Putten, Frans-Paul van. 2020. "Unabated, China Has Time on Its Side (Onverminderd Heeft China de Tijd Aan Zijn Kant)." *NRC*. 2020.  
<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2020/02/14/onverminderd-heeft-china-de-tijd-aan-zijn-kant-a3990508>.
- Miller, Alice. 2018. "Valedictory: Analyzing the Chinese Leadership in an Era of Sex, Money, and Power." *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 57.
- Miller, Alice Lyman. 2009. "Some Things We Used to Know about China's Past and Present (But Now, Not So Much)." *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 16 (1–2).
- Miller, Manjari Chatterjee. 2016. "The Role of Beliefs in Identifying Rising Powers." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 9 (2): 211–38.
- Miller, Tom. 2014. "A Dream of Asian Empire." *Gavekal Dragonomics*. 2014.  
<https://gavekal.com/doc.cfm?id=9167&src=rss>.
- Millward, James A. 2022. "(Identity) Politics in Command: Xi Jinping's July Visit to Xinjiang." *The China Story*. 2022. <https://www.thechinastory.org/identity-politics-in-command-xi-jinpings-july-visit-to-xinjiang/>.
- Min, Ye. 2020. *The Belt and Road and Beyond: State-Mobilized Globalization in China: 1998-2018*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Minzner, Carl. 2017. "'Xi-Isms' and Deepening Institutional Decay in China." *The News Lens*. 2017. <https://international.thenewslens.com/article/76810>.
- . 2018. *End of an Era: How China's Authoritarian Revival Is Undermining Its Rise*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mittelstaedt, Jean Christopher. 2021. "Rebuilding Authority: The Party's Relationship with Its Grassroots Organizations." *The China Quarterly*.
- Mitter, Rana. 2020. "Xi's World: Covid Has Accelerated China's Rise." *The Spectator*. 2020.  
<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/xis-world-covid-has-accelerated-chinas-rise>.
- MOFCOM. 2015. "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (推动共建丝绸之路经济带和21世纪海上丝绸之路的愿景与行动)." *Economic and Commercial Section, Consulate General of the PRC in Gothenburg*. 2015.  
<http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/i/dxfw/jlyd/201601/20160101243342.shtml>.
- Mohan, Giles. 2021. "Below the Belt? Territory and Development in China's International

- Rise.” *Development and Change* 52 (1).
- Mokry, Sabine. 2016. “How the Belt and Road Initiative Globalizes China’s National Security Policy.” *Merics Blog - European Voices on China*. 2016.  
<https://www.merics.org/en/blog/how-belt-and-road-initiative-globalizes-chinas-national-security-policy>.
- Moore, Malcolm. 2009. “China’s ‘Next Leader’ in Hardline Rant.” *The Telegraph*. 2009.  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/4637039/Chinas-next-leader-in-hardline-rant.html>.
- Morgan, Pippa. 2018. “Can China’s Economic Statecraft Win Soft Power in Africa? Unpacking Trade, Investment and Aid.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.
- Morimoto, Andy. 2018. “Question: Can China ‘Fall’ Peacefully?” *The National Review*. 2018. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/question-can-china-fall-peacefully-27867>.
- Moses, A. Dirk. 2021. *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and The Language of Transgression*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Movchan, Andrey. 2017. “Decline, Not Collapse: The Bleak Prospects for Russia’s Economy.” *Carnegie Moscow Center*. 2017.  
[https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP\\_Movchan\\_2017\\_web\\_Eng\\_2.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Movchan_2017_web_Eng_2.pdf).
- Mudge, Stephanie C. 2018. *Leftism Reinvented: Western Parties from Socialism to Neoliberalism*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Mühlhahn, Klaus. 2019. *Making China Modern: From the Great Qing to Xi Jinping*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Mujal-León, Eusebio; Busby, Joshua W. 2001. “Much Ado About Something? Regime Change in Cuba.” *Problems of Post-Communism* 48 (6).
- Muldoon, James; Rye, Danny. 2020. “Conceptualising Party-Driven Movements.” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 2 (3).
- Mulvad, Andreas. 2019. “Xiism as a Hegemonic Project in the Making: Sino-Communist Ideology and the Political Economy of China’s Rise.” *Review of International Studies* 45 (3).
- Mulvey, Benjamin; Lo, William Yat Wai. 2020. “Learning to ‘Tell China’s Story Well’: The Constructions of International Students in Chinese Higher Education Policy.” *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.
- Myers, Lucas. 2021. “Internal Politics, Instability, and China’s Frustrated Efforts to Escape the ‘Malacca Dilemma.’” *Wilson Center*. 2021. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/internal-politics-instability-and-chinas-frustrated-efforts-escape-malacca-dilemma>.
- Nakazawa, Katsuji. 2019. “The New Long March -- Xi’s 15-Year Battle Plan with the US.” *Nikkei Asia*. 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/China-up-close/The-new-Long-March-Xi-s-15-year-battle-plan-with-the-US>.
- Narins, Thomas P.; Agnew, John. 2019. “Missing from the Map: Chinese Exceptionalism, Sovereignty Regimes and the Belt Road Initiative.” *Geopolitics*.
- Nathan, Andrew J. 2003. “China’s Changing of the Guard: Authoritarian Resilience.” *Journal of Democracy* 14 (1): 6–17.
- Nexon, Daniel H. 2021. “Against Great Power Competition: The U.S. Should Not Confuse Means for Ends.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Ng, Wai-Ming. 2014. “Names for China in Tokugawa Political Discourse.” *Journal of Asian History* 48 (1).
- Nie, Wenjuan. 2016. “Xi Jinping’s Foreign Policy Dilemma: One Belt, One Road or the South China Sea?” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 38 (3): 422–44.
- Nisbett, Richard E. 2011. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think*

- Differently and Why*. London: Hachette.
- Nordin, Astrid H.M.; Smith, Graham Mark. 2020. "China's Rise and 'Responsibility' in the 21st Century." *British Journal of Chinese Studies* 10.
- Norrlöf, Carla. 2020. "Is Covid-19 A Liberal Democratic Curse? Risks for Liberal International Order." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*.
- Nouwens, Veerle. 2019. "China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road: Implications for the UK." *RUSI Occasional Paper*.
- Nove, Alec. 1991. "'Allocational Efficiency' - Can It Be So?" *Soviet Studies* 43 (3).
- Nye, Joseph S. 2019. "How to Deal with a Declining Russia." *Project Syndicate*. 2019. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/dealing-with-danger-of-declining-russia-by-joseph-s-nye-2019-11>.
- . 2021. "With China, a 'Cold War' Analogy Is Lazy and Dangerous." *The New York Times*. 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/opinion/biden-china-cold-war.html>.
- Nymalm, Nicola. 2020. *From "Japan Problem" to "China Threat"? Rising Powers in US Economic Discourse*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Oakes, Tim. 2019. "China Made: Infrastructural Thinking in a Chinese Register." *Made in China Journal* 2: 66–71.
- O'Brien, Kevin J. 2011. "Studying Chinese Politics in an Age of Specialization." *Journal of Contemporary China* 20 (71).
- . 2018. "Speaking to Theory and Speaking to the China Field." *Issues & Studies: A Social Science Quarterly on China, Taiwan, and East Asian Affairs* 54 (4).
- Okuda, Hiroko. 2016. "China's 'Peaceful Rise/Peaceful Development': A Case Study of Media Frames of the Rise of China." *Global Media and China*, 1–18.
- O'Neill, Jim. 2020. "Blaming China Is a Dangerous Distraction." *Chatham House*. 2020. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/blaming-china-dangerous-distraction>.
- Ong, Russell. 2007. "Peaceful Evolution, Regime Change and China's Political Security." *Journal of Contemporary China* 16 (53).
- Orazgaliyev, Serik. 2018. "Reconstructing MNE-Host Country Bargaining Model in the International Oil Industry." *Transnational Corporations Review* 10 (1): 30–42.
- Orlik, Tom. 2020. *China: The Bubble That Never Pops*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Overholt, William H. 1993. *The Rise of China: How Economic Reform Is Creating a New Superpower*. London: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . 2018. *China's Crisis of Success*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ownby, David; Cheek, Timothy. 2020. "Jiang Shigong, 'Philosophy and History.'" *Reading the China Dream*. 2020. <https://www.readingthechinadream.com/jiang-shigong-philosophy-and-history.html>.
- Page, John. 1994. "The East Asian Miracle: Four Lessons for Development Policy." In *The National Bureau of Economics Macroeconomics Annual 1994*, edited by Julio J. Fischer, Stanley; Rotemberg, 9th ed., 219–82.
- Pantucci, Raffaello. 2018. "China's Belt and Road Hits Problems but Is Still Popular." *Financial Times*. 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/814b39ea-e8cd-11e8-a34c-663b3f553b35>.
- . 2020. "Is China Getting Real with Its Grandiose Visions for the Belt and Road?" *South China Morning Post*. 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3048686/china-getting-real-its-grandiose-visions-belt-and-road>.
- Parameswaran, Prashanth. 2019. "Malaysia's Evolving Approach to China's Belt and Road Initiative." *The Diplomat*. 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/malysias-evolving->



[approach-to-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/](#).

- Patalano, Alessio. 2020. "A Gathering Storm? The Chinese 'Attrition' Strategy for the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands." *RUSI Newsbrief*. 2020. <https://rusi.org/publication/rusi-newsbrief/chinese-attrition-strategy-senkaku>.
- Paul, Justin. 2016. "The Rise of China: What, When, Why, and Why?" *The International Trade Journal*.
- Paxton, Robert O. 2004. *The Anatomy of Fascism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Payne, Sebastian; Warrell, Helen; Hughes, Laura. 2020. "Senior Tories Call for Reset of China Relations." *Financial Times*. 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/b1dfb7b5-5140-4408-abc0-7d0b7f783a58>.
- People's Daily. 2021. "A New Chapter on the Right Path of Mankind [Q&A Series 7 on the Study of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism in the New Era] (人间正道开新篇[习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想学习问答⑦]——关于新时代坚持和发展中国特色社会主义)." *People's Daily*. 2021. <http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2021/0727/c1001-32170673.html>.
- Pearson, Margaret; Rithmire, Meg; Tsai, Kellee S. 2021. "Party-State Capitalism in China." 21–065. Boston. <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/party-state-capitalism-in-china>.
- Pei, Minxin. 1994. *From Reform to Revolution: The Demise of Communism in China and the Soviet Union*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 2002. "China's Governance Crisis." *Foreign Affairs* 81 (5): 96–109.
- . 2008. *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 2009. "Dangerous Denials." *Foreign Affairs*. 2009. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/22/dangerous-denials/>.
- . 2016. *China's Crony Capitalism: The Dynamics of State Decay*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 2018. "The Rise and Fall of the China Model: Implications for World Peace." In *Will China's Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 163–83. Oxford University Press.
- . 2019. "Xi Jinping's Annus Horribilis." *Project Syndicate*. 2019. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/xi-china-vulnerable-authoritarian-by-minxin-pei-2019-12>.
- . 2020. "China's Coming Upheaval." *Foreign Affairs*, no. May-June.
- . 2021. "China: Totalitarianism's Long Shadow." *Journal of Democracy* 32 (2).
- . 2021. "The Party Is Not Forever." *Project Syndicate*. 2021. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/dictatorial-parties-poor-longevity-record-is-warning-to-china-by-minxin-pei-2021-06>.
- Pepinsky, Thomas; Weiss, Jessica Chen. 2021. "The Clash of Systems? Washington Should Avoid Ideological Competition With Beijing." *Foreign Affairs*. 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-11/clash-systems>.
- Perdue, Peter C. 2015. "The Tenacious Tributary System." *Journal of Contemporary China* 24 (96): 1002–14.
- Perry, Elizabeth. 2018. "Is the Chinese Communist Regime Legitimate?" In *The China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power*, edited by Michael Rudolph, Jennifer Szonyi, 11–17. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pfeffer, Richard M. 1976. "Mao and Marx in the Marxist-Leninist Tradition: A Critique of 'The China Field' and a Contribution to a Preliminary Reappraisal." *Modern China* 2 (4): 421–60.
- Pieke, Frank N. 2007. "Market Leninism: Party Schools and Cadre Training in Contemporary

- China.” 3.
- Pillsbury, Michael. 2016. *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Pils, Eva. 2021. “Complicity in Democratic Engagement with Autocratic Systems.” *Ethics & Global Politics*.
- Plekhanov, Georgi Valentinovich. 2009. “Beiträge Zur Geschichte Des Materialismus: Holbach - Hevetius - Marx (Essays on the History of Materialism: Holbach - Hevetius - Marx).” In *Selected Philosophical Works, Vol. II*, 31–182. Stuttgart: Bern Müller Verlag.
- Pocock, John Greville Agard. 1969. “Review of Political Philosophy and Time by John G. Gunnell.” *History and Theory* 8 (2): 295–301.
- Politi, James. 2019. “White House Objects to \$1bn World Bank Loan Programme for China.” *Financial Times*. 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/e1da66f0-17a2-11ea-9ee4-11f260415385>.
- Polk, Andrew. 2018. “China Is Quietly Setting Global Standards.” *Bloomberg*. 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-05-06/china-is-quietly-setting-global-standards>.
- Pons, Silvio; Di Donato, Michele. 2017. “Reform Communism.” In *Endgames? Late Communism in Global Perspective, 1968 to the Present*, edited by Mark Furst, Juliane; Pons, Silvio; Selden, The Cambri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prasso, Sheridan. 2020. “One of China's Most Ambitious Projects Becomes a Corridor to Nowhere.” *Bloomberg*. 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2020-03-02/a-china-belt-and-road-project-becomes-a-corridor-to-nowhere>.
- Pu, Xiaoyu; Wang, Chengli. 2018. “Rethinking China's Rise: Chinese Scholars Debate Strategic Overstretch.” *International Affairs* 94 (5): 1019–35.
- Pye, Lucian W. 1978. “Aesopian Language in Chinese Politics.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 122 (5): 336–39.
- . 1988. *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies - University of Michigan.
- . 1990. “China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society.” *Foreign Affairs* 69 (1).
- Qin, Bei; Strömberg, David; Wu, Yanhui. 2018. “Media Bias in China.” *American Economic Review* 108 (9).
- Qin, Yaqing. 2009. “Relationality and Processual Construction: Bringing Chinese Ideas into International Relations Theory.” *Social Sciences in China* 30 (4): 5–20.
- . 2014. “Continuity through Change: Background Knowledge and China's International Strategy.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 285–314.
- . 2018. *A Relational Theory of World Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Radchenko, Sergey S. 2020. “The Sino-Soviet Relationship in the Mirror of the Cold War.” *China International Strategy Review*.
- Ramamurti, Ravi. 2001. “The Obsolescing ‘Bargaining Model’? MNC-Host Developing Country Relations Revisited.” *Journal of International Business Studies* 32 (1): 23–39.
- Rae, James DeShaw; Wang, Xiaodan. 2016. “Placing Race, Culture, and the State in Chinese National Identity: Han, Hua, or Zhongguo?” *Asian Politics & Policy* 8 (3): 474–93.
- Ree, Erik Van. 2010. “Lenin's Conception of Socialism in One Country, 1915-17.” *Revolutionary Russia* 23 (2): 159–81.
- Rehman, Sherry. 2019. “CPEC 2.0: The Promise and the Peril.” *Dawn*. 2019. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1502790/cpec-20-the-promise-and-the-peril>.
- Rennenkampff, Marik Von. 2019. “The Analysts Are Wrong: Putin's Aggression Exposes Russia's Decline.” *The Hill*. 2019. <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/470552-the->

- [analysts-are-wrong-putins-aggression-exposes-russias-decline](#).
- Reich, Simon; Dombrowski, Peter. 2020. "The Consequence of COVID-19: How the United States Moved from Security Provider to Security Consumer." *International Affairs* 96 (5).
- Reilly, Thomas H. 2021. *Saving the Nation: Chinese Protestant Elites and the Quest to Build a New China, 1922-1952*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ren, Zhongping. 2019. "Pack and Commence the New Long March - On the Educational Campaign of Do Not Forget the Original Aspiration, Remember the Mission (新长征路上重整行装再出发——论‘不忘初心、牢记使命’主题教育)." *People's Daily*. 2019. <http://chuxin.people.cn/n1/2019/0902/c428144-31330314.html>.
- Renninger, Philipp. 2020. "The 'People's Total War on COVID-19': Urban Pandemic Management through (Non-)Law in Wuhan, China." *Washington International Law Journal Association*.
- Repnikova, Maria. 2020. "The Subtle Muckrakers of the Coronavirus Epidemic." *The New York Times*. 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/05/opinion/coronavirus-china-news-journalism.html>.
- CRS Report. 2020. "COVID-19 and China: A Chronology of Events (December 2019-January 2020)." Washington, D.C. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/r/r46354>.
- Reuters. 2020. "Exclusive: Internal Chinese Report Warns Beijing Faces Tiananmen-like Global Backlash over Virus – Sources." *Reuters*. 2020. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-china-sentiment-ex/exclusive-internal-chinese-report-warns-beijing-faces-tiananmen-like-global-backlash-over-virus-sources-idUKKBN22G198>.
- Reve, Karel van het. 1989. *The Comrades' Faith (Het Geloof Der Kameraden)*. Amsterdam: G.A. van Oorschot.
- Richardson, Courtney J. 2011. "A Responsible Power? China and the UN Peacekeeping Regime." *International Peacekeeping* 18 (3): 286–97.
- Rigby, T.H. 1998. "Stalinism and the Mono-Organizational Society." In *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*. London: Routledge.
- Ringen, Stein. 2016. *The Perfect Dictatorship: China in the 21st Century*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Roach, Stephen S. 2019. "China's Long View." *Project Syndicate*. 2019. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-takes-long-view-on-america-cold-war-by-stephen-s-roach-2019-07>.
- Robinson, Neil. 1995. *Ideology and the Collapse of the Soviet Union: A Critical History of Soviet Ideological Discourse*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Roctus, Jasper. 2020. "Remolding China's 'Empty' Belt and Road Initiative: An Opportunity for the EU." *Egmont Institute - Security Policy Brief*. 2020. <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2020/06/spb128-Jasper-Roctus.pdf?type=pdf>.
- Roetz, Heiner r. 2016. "Who Is Engaged in the 'Complicity with Power'? On the Difficulties Sinology Has with Dissent and Transcendence." In *Transcendence, Immanence, and Intercultural Philosophy*, edited by William Brown, Nahum; Franke. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rolland, Nadège. 2017a. "All Aboard the Belt and Road Initiative? Not so Fast..." *The Interpreter*. 2017. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/all-aboard-belt-and-road-initiative-not-so-fast>.
- . 2017b. *China's Eurasian Century? Political and Strategic Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative*. New Delhi: Pentagon Press.

- . 2019. “Beijing’s Response to the Belt and Road Initiative’s ‘Pushback’: A Story of Assessment and Adaptation.” *Asian Affairs*.
- . 2020. “China’s Vision for a New World Order.” <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-vision-for-a-new-world-order/>
- . 2021. “A New World Order, According to Beijing.” [https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ICDS-EFPI-Brief\\_A-New-World-Order-According-to-Beijing\\_Nadege-Rolland\\_February-2021.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ICDS-EFPI-Brief_A-New-World-Order-According-to-Beijing_Nadege-Rolland_February-2021.pdf).
- Rolland, Nadège; Zenz, Adrian; Smith, Jeff; Summers, Tim; Haenle, Paul; Hillman, Jonathan; Russel, Daniel R. 2019. “Is This the End of Belt and Road, or Just the Beginning? A ChinaFile Conversation.” *ChinaFile*. 2019. <http://www.chinafile.com/conversation/end-of-belt-and-road-or-just-beginning>.
- Romig, Tatjana. 2020. “China Studies Fatigue or Why We Need to Prepare Young China Scholars to Face Ethical Questions.” *Mapping China Journal*. 2020. <https://mappingchina.org/2020/08/china-studies-fatigue-or-why-we-need-to-prepare-young-china-scholars-to-face-ethical-questions/>.
- Rosenau, James N. 2006. *The Study of World Politics, Vol. I: Theoretical and Methodological Challenges*. London: Routledge.
- Ross, Robert S. 2018. “On the Fungibility of Economic Power: China’s Economic Rise and the East Asian Security Order.” *European Journal of International Relations* 25 (1).
- Roy, J. Stapleton. 2018. “‘The Key Problem of Our Time’: A Conversation with Henry Kissinger on Sino-U.S. Relations.” *Wilson Center*. 2018. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-key-problem-our-time-conversation-henry-kissinger-sino-us-relations>.
- Rozelle, Scott; Hell, Natalie. 2020. *Invisible China: How the Urban-Rural Divide Threatens China’s Rise*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rudyak, Marina. 2019. “The Ins and Outs of China’s International Development Agency.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/09/02/ins-and-outs-of-china-s-international-indevelopment-agency-pub-79739>.
- Ryckmans, Pierre. 1984. “Orientalism and Sinology.” *Asian Studies Association of Australia*.
- Sachs, Jeffrey D. 2021. “Finding the Origins of COVID-19 and Preventing Future Pandemics.” *Project Syndicate*. 2021. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/finding-the-origins-of-covid19-by-jeffrey-d-sachs-2021-06?barrier=accesspaylog>.
- Saich, Tony. 2021. *From Rebel to Ruler*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sakwa, Richard. 2017. *Russia Against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Samuel, Juliet. 2018. “China’s Rise as a Power Is Inevitable - and the West Can Benefit from It.” *The Telegraph*. 2018. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/04/09/chinas-rise-power-inevitable-west-can-benefit/>  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/04/09/chinas-rise-power-inevitable-west-can-benefit/>.
- Saunders, Elizabeth N. 2006. “Setting Boundaries: Can International Society Exclude ‘Rogue States’?” *International Studies Review* 8: 25–53
- Saunders, Phillip C.; Scobell, A., ed. 2015. *PLA Influence on China’s National Security Policymaking*.
- Saxonberg, Steven. 2013. *Transitions and Non-Transitions from Communism: Regime*



- Survival in China, Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schake, Kori. 2017. *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Schell, Orville; Delury, John. 2013. *Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Random House.
- Schmalzer, Sigrid. 2021. "Beyond Bias: Critical Analysis and Layered Reading of Mao-Era Sources." *Positions* 29 (4).
- Schmidt-Glintzer, Helwig. 2009. *Chinas Angst Vor Der Freiheit: Der Lange Weg in Die Moderne (China's Fear of Freedom: The Long Road into Modernity)*. Munich: C.H. Beck.
- Schoenhals, Michael. 1999. "Political Movements, Change and Stability: The Chinese Communist Party in Power." *The China Quarterly*, no. 159.
- Schram, Stuart R. 1971. "Mao Tse-Tung and the Theory of Permanent Revolution, 1958-69." *The China Quarterly*, no. 46: 221-44.
- Schubert, Gunter; Alpermann, Björn. 2019. "Studying the Chinese Policy Process in the Era of 'Top-Level Design': The Contribution of 'Political Steering' Theory." *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.
- Schurmann, Franz. 1966. *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- SCIO. 2015. "China's Military Strategy (中国的军事战略)." *State Council Information Office*. 2015. [http://www.81.cn/dblj/2015-05/26/content\\_6507373.htm](http://www.81.cn/dblj/2015-05/26/content_6507373.htm).
- . 2019. "China's Defence in the New Era (新时代的中国国防)." *State Council Information Office*. 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-07/24/c\\_1124792450.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-07/24/c_1124792450.htm).
- . 2020. "Full Text: Fighting COVID-19: China in Action." *State Council Information Office*. 2020. [http://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2020-06/07/content\\_76135269.htm](http://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2020-06/07/content_76135269.htm).
- . 2021. "China: Democracy That Works (中国的民主)." *PRC GOV*. 2021. [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-12/04/content\\_5655823.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-12/04/content_5655823.htm).
- Scobell, Andrew. 2022. "China and Grand Strategy: Does the Empire Have a Plan? A Review Essay." *Political Science Quarterly* 137 (1).
- Scott, Jason. 2020. "Australia Stokes China Tensions With Call for Virus Probe." *Bloomberg News*. 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-28/australia-stokes-china-tensions-with-call-for-virus-origin-probe>.
- Selden, Mark. 1995. "Yan'an Communism Reconsidered." *Modern China* 21 (1): 8-44.
- Sell, Susan K. 2020. "What COVID-19 Reveals About Twenty-First Century Capitalism: Adversity and Opportunity." *Development* 63.
- Sevastopulo, Demetri. 2019. "Why Trump's America Is Rethinking Engagement with China." *Financial Times*. 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/f882b7c2-1339-11e9-a581-4ff78404524e>.
- Shambaugh, David. 1996. "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses." *International Security* 21 (2): 180-209.
- . 2008. *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2013. *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shambaugh, David; Carson, Brad. 2018. "Vicious Cycle: The Opening and Closing of Chinese Politics." *War on the Rocks*. 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/12/jaw-jaw-vicious-cycle-the-opening-and-closing-of-chinese-politics/>.

- Sharma, Vishakha; Ghildial, A.K. 2014. "Relevancy of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Panchsheel) in Post Cold War Era." *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 2 (5).
- Shen, Simon. 2007. *Redefining Nationalism in Modern China: Sino-American Relations and the Emergence of Chinese Public Opinion in the 21st Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shen, Yongdong; Yu, Jianxing; Zhou, Jun. 2020. "The Administration's Retreat and the Party's Advance in the New Era of Xi Jinping: The Politics of the Ruling Party, the Government, and Associations in China." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 25.
- Shen, Simon. 2007. *Redefining Nationalism in Modern China: Sino-American Relations and the Emergence of Chinese Public Opinion in the 21st Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shen, Zhihua; Xia, Yafeng. 2011. "The Great Leap Forward, the People's Commune and the Sino-Soviet Split." *Journal of Contemporary China* 20 (72): 861–80.
- Sheridan, Greg. 2021. "Coronavirus: WHO Inquiry as Close to Useless as You Could Get While Still Having an Inquiry." *The Australian*. 2021.  
[https://www.theaustralian.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=TAWEB\\_WRE170\\_a&dest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theaustralian.com.au%2Fnation%2Fpolitics%2Fcoronavirus-behaviour-buck-stops-with-beijing%2Fnews-story%2Fe5644014d3362697ba977eb02761fe81&memtype=anonymous&](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=TAWEB_WRE170_a&dest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theaustralian.com.au%2Fnation%2Fpolitics%2Fcoronavirus-behaviour-buck-stops-with-beijing%2Fnews-story%2Fe5644014d3362697ba977eb02761fe81&memtype=anonymous&).
- Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2016. "Evolving Norms of Protection: China, Libya and the Problem of Intervention in Armed Conflict." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*.
- Shevtsova, Lilia. 1992. "The August Coup and the Soviet Collapse." *Survival* 34 (1).
- Shiffrinson, Joshua R. 2018a. *Rising Titans, Falling Giants: How Great Powers Exploit Power Shifts*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 2018b. "Should the United States Fear China's Rise?" *The Washington Post* 41 (4): 65–83.
- . 2019. "The 'New Cold War' with China Is Way Overblown. Here's Why." *The Washington Post*. 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2019/02/08/there-isnt-a-new-cold-war-with-china-for-these-4-reasons/>.
- Shih, Chih-yu; Huang, Chiung-chiu. 2015. "China's Quest for Grand Strategy: Power, National Interest, or Relational Security?" *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 1–26.
- Shih, Chih-yu. 2021. "Role and Relation in Confucian IR: Relating to Strangers in the States of Nature." *Review of International Studies*.
- Shih, Gerry. 2019. "In Central Asia's Forbidding Highlands, A Quiet Newcomer: Chinese Troops." *The Washington Post*. 2019.  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9-a759-2b8541bbbe20\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9-a759-2b8541bbbe20_story.html).
- Shih, Victor C. 2021. "China's Leninist Response to COVID-19: From Information Repression to Total Mobilization." In *Corona Virus: The Comparative Politics and Policy of COVID-19*, edited by André Greer, Scott L.; King, Elizabeth J.; Massard da Fonseca, Elize; Peralta-Santos. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Shirk, Susan. 2008. *China: Fragile Superpower*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2022. *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shi, Yinhong. 2018. "China Ought to Implement A New-Style 'Taoguang Yanghui' and

- ‘Yousuo Zuowei’ (中国应实行新形态的‘韬光养晦’和‘有所作为’).” *US-China Perception Monitor* [中美印象]. 2018. [http://www.uscnpm.com/model\\_item.html?action=view&table=article&id=17420](http://www.uscnpm.com/model_item.html?action=view&table=article&id=17420).
- Silove, Nina. 2018. “Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of ‘Grand Strategy.’” *Security Studies* 27 (1).
- Sine, Jonathon P. 2021. “The Long Game by Rush Doshi: Hundred-Year Marathon 2.0?” *Personal Blog*. 2021. <https://jonathonpsine.substack.com/p/hundred-year-marathon-20?s=r>.
- Shlapentokh, Vladimir. 2017. *A Normal Totalitarian Society: How the Soviet Union Functioned and How It Collapsed*. London: Routledge.
- Shou, Xiaosong, ed. 2013. *The Study of Military Strategy* (战略学). Beijing: The Military Strategy Research Centre of the Academy of Military Sciences (军事科学院军事战略研究部).
- Shue, Vivienne. 2018. “Party-State, Nation, Empire: Rethinking the Grammar of Chinese Governance.” *Journal of Chinese Governance* 3 (3).
- Siddiqui, Naveed. 2021. “‘Punish the Perpetrators’: China Presses Pakistan for ‘Practical Measures’ after Gwadar Attack.” *Dawn*. 2021. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1641817>.
- Sipalan, Joseph. 2019. “China, Malaysia Restart Massive ‘Belt and Road’ Project after Hiccups.” *Reuters*. 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-silkroad-malaysia/china-malaysia-restart-massive-belt-and-road-project-after-hiccups-idUSKCN1UK0DG>.
- Skibsted, Jens Martin. 2014. “Short-Term Thinking Is Our Biggest Problem. Here’s 3 Ways To Fight It.” *Fast Company*. 2014. <https://www.fastcompany.com/1665526/short-term-thinking-is-our-biggest-problem-heres-3-ways-to-fight-it>.
- Sky. 2021. “COVID-19: WHO Team Leaves Quarantine in Wuhan to Begin Coronavirus Origins Study.” *Sky News*. 2021. <https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-who-team-leaves-quarantine-in-wuhan-to-begin-coronavirus-origins-study-12200998>.
- Small, Andrew. 2017. “First Movement: Pakistan and the Belt and Road Initiative.” *Asia Policy* 24 (1): 80–87.
- Smith, Aminda. 2021. “Long Live the Mass Line! Errant Cadres and Post-Disillusionment PRC History.” *Positions* 29 (4).
- Smith, Stephen N. 2018. “Community of Common Destiny: China’s ‘New Assertiveness’ and the Changing Asian Order.” *International Journal* 73 (3): 449–63.
- Smyth, Jamie. 2020. “Australia Defies China with Renewed Calls for Coronavirus Inquiry.” *Financial Times*. 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/fcf081a5-1729-4906-839c-bbe23ae76562>.
- Snape Wang, Holly; Wang, Weinan. 2020. “Finding a Place for the Party: Debunking the ‘Party-State’ and Rethinking the State-Society Relationship in China’s One-Party System.” *Journal of Chinese Governance*.
- Snidal, Duncan. 1985. “The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory.” *International Organization* 39 (4): 579–614.
- Song, Qiang; Huang, Jisu; Song, Xiaojun; Wang, Xiaodong; Liu, Yang. 2009. *Unhappy China: The Great Time, Grand Vision and Our Challenges* (中国不高兴：大时代、大目标及我们的内忧外患). Nanjing: Jiangsu People’s Publishing House (江苏人民出版社).
- Song, Qiang; Zhang, Zangzang; Qiao, Bian; T. 1996. *The China That Can Say No: Political and Emotional Choices in the Post-Cold War Era* (中国可以说：冷战后时代的政治

- 与情感抉择). Beijing: China Industry and Commerce Press (中国工商出版社).
- Sorace, Christian P. 2016. "Party Spirit Made Flesh: The Production of Legitimacy in the Aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake." *The China Journal*, no. 76.
- . 2017. *Shaken Authority: China's Communist Party and the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake*. London: Cornell University Press.
- . 2020. "Democratic Corpses and Communist Specters: Between the Liberal Democratic and Post-Socialist State." In *The Future of the State: Philosophy and Politics*, edited by Artemy Magun. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Sørensen, Camilla T.N. 2015. "The Significance of Xi Jinping's 'Chinese Dream' for Chinese Foreign Policy: From 'Tao Guang Yang Hui' to 'Fen Fa You Wei.'" *Journal of China and International Relations* 3 (1): 53–73.
- Sparke, Matthew; William, Owain David. 2021. "Neoliberal Disease: COVID-19, Co-Pathogenesis and Global Health Insecurities." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*.
- Spence, Jonathan D. 2011. "Kissinger and China." *The New York Review*. 2011. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/06/09/kissinger-and-china/>.
- Spiegeleire, Stephan; Chivot, Eline; Silveira, João; Wang, Michelle Yuemin; Zelinska, Olga De. 2014. "Assessing Assertions of Assertiveness: The Chinese and Russian Cases." [https://hcss.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/Great\\_Powers\\_Assertiveness.pdf](https://hcss.nl/sites/default/files/files/reports/Great_Powers_Assertiveness.pdf).
- Spufford, Francis. 2010. *Red Plenty*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Stahlman, Sarah. 2021. "China's Peaking Power: An Interview with Michael Beckley." AEI. 2021. <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/chinas-peaking-power-an-interview-with-michael-beckley/>.
- Stalin, Joseph Vissarionovich. 1938. "Dialectical and Historical Materialism." *Marxists.Org*. 1938. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1938/09.htm>.
- Stanford. 2015. "Walter Benjamin." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2015. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/benjamin/>.
- Steinfeld, Edward S. 2010. *Playing Our Game: Why China's Economic Rise Doesn't Threaten the West*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stephens, Philip. 2021. "Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin Are the Big Losers from This Pandemic." *Financial Times*. 2021. <https://www.ft.com/content/b8221860-8a09-11ea-a01c-a28a3e3fbd33>.
- Stock, Ady Van den. 2014. "The Horizon of Modernity: Observations on New Confucian Philosophy in History and Thought." Ghent University.
- Stoker, Donald. 2019. *Why America Loses Wars: Limited War and the US Strategy from the Korean War to Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Storey, David. 2001. *Territory: The Claiming of Space*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Stuenkel, Oliver. 2016a. *Post-Western World: How Emerging Powers Are Remaking Global Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- . 2016b. *The BRICS and the Future of Global Order*. Lexington Books.
- Styan, David. 2020. "China's Maritime Silk Road and Small States: Lessons from the Case of Djibouti." *Journal of Contemporary China* 29 (122).
- Su, Xiaohui. 2019. "Why Does Asia Need A 'New' Security Concept?" CGTN. 2019. <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d774e3351444f34457a6333566d54/index.html>.
- Suárez Cortina, Manuel. 2006. *Liberal Spain (1868-1917): Politics and Society (La España Liberal (1868-1917: Política y Sociedad))*. Madrid: Síntesis.
- Subramanian, Arvind. 2011. "The Inevitable Superpower: Why China's Dominance Is a Sure Thing." *Foreign Affairs* 90 (5): 66–78.



- Suchkov, Maxim A. 2021. "Whose Hybrid Warfare? How 'the Hybrid Warfare' Concept Shapes Russian Discourse, Military, and Political Practice." *Small Wars & Insurgencies*.
- Sun, Feng; Zhang, Wanfa. 2020. *Why Communist China Isn't Collapsing. The CCP's Battle for Survival and State-Society Dynamics in the Post-Reform Era*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sun, Weiguo. 2012. "An Analysis of the 'Little China' Ideology of Chosŏn Korea." *Frontiers of History in China*.
- Sutton, H.I. 2020. "China's New High-Security Compound In Pakistan May Indicate Naval Plans." *Forbes*. 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/06/02/chinas-new-high-security-compound-in-pakistan-may-indicate-naval-plans/?sh=246830ea1020>.
- Svara, James H. 1998. "The Politics-Administration Dichotomy Model as Aberration." *Public Administration Review* 58 (1).
- Swaine, Michael D. 2012. "Chinese Leadership and Elite Responses to the U.S. Pacific Pivot." *China Leadership Monitor*. 2012. [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Swaine\\_CLM\\_38\\_Final\\_Draft\\_pdf.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Swaine_CLM_38_Final_Draft_pdf.pdf).
- . 2020. "Chinese Crisis Decision Making—Managing the COVID-19 Pandemic Part One: The Domestic Component." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/01/chinese-crisis-decision-making-managing-covid-19-pandemic-part-one-domestic-component-pub-81952>.
- Swaine, Michael D.; Tellis, Ashley J. 2000. *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future*. Washington, D.C.: RAND.
- Szonyi, Michael. 2013. "Shifting Frontiers: Cross-Strait Relations in the Context of Local Society." In *Mobile Horizons: Dynamics across the Taiwan Strait*, edited by Wen-hsin Yeh. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies.
- Tagangaeva, Maria. 2017. "'Socialist in Content, National in Form': The Making of Soviet National Art and the Case of Buryatia." *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 45 (3).
- Taliaferro, Jeffrey W.; Lorell, Steven, E.; Ripsman, Norrin M. 2018. "Is Peaceful Change in World Politics Always Desirable? A Neoclassical Realist Perspective." *International Studies Review* 20: 283–91.
- Tang, Wenfang. 2016. *Populist Authoritarianism: Chinese Political Culture and Regime Sustainability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tank, Pinar. 2012. "The Concept of 'Rising Powers.'" *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre Policy Brief*.
- Tannery, Claude. 1991. *Malraux, the Absolute Agnostic; Or, Metamorphosis as Universal Law*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tatlow, Didi Kirsten. 2018. "Cultural Relativism and the Obliviousness to Power: Critical Remarks on the German Debate on China (*Kultureller Relativismus Und Machtvergessenheit: Kritische Anmerkungen Zur Deutschen China-Debatte*)." *Zentrum Liberale Moderne*. 2018. <https://libmod.de/china-debatte-kultureller-relativismus-und-machtvergessenheit/>.
- Taylor, Alan M. 2014. "The Argentina Paradox: Microexplanations and Macropuzzles." *Latin American Economic Review* 27 (3).
- Teng, Biao. 2020. "Oppression, Resistance and High-Tech Totalitarianism." *Public Seminar*. 2020. <https://publicseminar.org/essays/oppression-resistance-and-the-high-tech-totalitarianism/>.
- Tenzin, Jinba; Lee, Chengpang. 2022. "Are We Still Dependent? Academic Dependency Theory After 20 Years." *Journal of Historical Sociology*.
- Terrill, Ross. 2003. *The New Chinese Empire: And What It Means for the United States*. New

- York: Basic Books.
- Thießen, Malte. 2007. "Bernhard Gotto: Nationalsozialistische Kommunalpolitik." *Sehepunkte*. 2007. <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2007/07/10829.html>.
- Thomas, Neil. 2019a. "Mao Redux: The Enduring Relevance of Self-Reliance in China." Macro Polo. 2019. <https://macropolo.org/analysis/china-self-reliance-xi-jin-ping-mao/>.
- . 2019b. "Shanghai Free Trade Zone: Putting Reform Over Opening." Macro Polo. 2019. <https://macropolo.org/shanghai-free-trade-zone-reform-opening/>.
- Thompson, Mark R; Ortmann, Stephan. 2018. "Mis-Modelling Singapore: China's Challenges in Learning from the City-State." *The China Quarterly*, 1–19.
- Thornton, John L. 2008. "Long Time Coming: The Prospects for Democracy in China." *Foreign Affairs January/February*.
- Thornton, Patricia M. 2009. "Crisis and Governance: SARS and the Resilience of the Chinese Body Politic." *The China Journal*, no. 61: 23–48.
- . 2013. "The Advance of the Party: Transformation or Takeover of Urban Grassroots Society?" *The China Quarterly* 213.
- Tian, Chenshan. 2004. *Chinese Dialectics: From Yijing to Marxism*. Washington, D.C.: Lexington Books.
- . 2019. "Mao Zedong, Sinicization of Marxism, and Traditional Chinese Thought Culture." *Asian Studies-Azijske Studije* 7 (1): 13–36.
- Tian, Wenlin. 2021. "Popular Sovereignty Is the Original Aspiration of Chinese Democracy (人民当家作主是中国民主的初心)." *CPC News* (中国共产党新闻网). 2021. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2021/1210/c40531-32304276.html>.
- Tobin, Daniel. 2020. "How Xi Jinping's 'New Era' Should Have Ended U.S. Debate on Beijing's Ambitions." *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*. 2020. [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/testimonies/SFR for USCCTobinD20200313.pdf](https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/testimonies/SFR_for_USCCTobinD20200313.pdf).
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1967. *The Old Regime and the Revolution (L'Ancien Régime et La Révolution)*. Edited by J.-P. Mayer. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Todd, Emmanuel. 1990. *The Final Fall: An Essay on the Decomposition of Hte Soviet Sphere (La Chute Finale : Essai Sur La Décomposition de La Sphère Soviétique)*. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- Tønnesson, Stein; Baev, Pavel K. 2017. "Stress-Test for Chinese Restraint: China Evaluates Russia's Use of Force." *Strategic Analysis*.
- Torigian, Joseph. 2017. "The Shadow of Deng Xiaoping on Chinese Elite Politics." *War on the Rocks*. 2017. <https://warontherocks.com/2017/01/the-shadow-of-deng-xiaoping-on-chinese-elite-politics/>.
- . 2020. "Xi Jinping's Tiananmen Family Lessons." *Foreign Policy*. 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/04/xi-jinping-tiananmen-lessons-chinese-communist-party/>.
- . 2022. *Prestige, Manipulation, and Coercion: Elite Power Struggles in the Soviet Union and China after Stalin and Mao*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Truex, Rory. 2016. *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Trump, Donald J. 2017. "National Security Strategy of the United States of America." 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.
- Tsai, Wen-Hsuan; Liao, Xingmiu. 2020. "A Mechanism of Coded Communication: Xinwen Lianbo and CCP Politics." *Modern China*.

- Tsang, Steve. 2009. "Consultative Leninism: China's New Political Framework." *Journal of Contemporary China* 18 (62): 865–80.
- . 2019. "Party-State Realism: A Framework for Understanding China's Approach to Foreign Policy." *Journal of Contemporary China*, 1–15.
- Tseng, Huan-Kai; Krog, Ryan. 2017. "No Strings Attached: Chinese Foreign Aid and Regime Stability in Resource-Rich Recipient Countries." *Paper presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, Chicago, IL, January 6–8.*
- Tsimonis, Konstantin. 2021. *The Chinese Communist Youth League: Juniority and Responsiveness in a Party Youth Organization*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Tucker, Robert C. 1961. "Towards a Comparative Politics of Movement Regimes." *The American Political Science Review* 55 (2).
- . 1978. "Introduction." In *The Marx-Engels Reader: Second Edition*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- . 1999. "Stalinism as Revolution from Above." In *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Tull, Denis M. 2006. "China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 44 (3): 459–79.
- Tunsjø, Øystein. 2013. *Security and Profit in China's Energy Policy: Hedging Against Risk*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Turner, Oliver. 2016. "China, India, and the US Rebalance to the Asia Pacific: The Geopolitics of Rising Identities." *Geopolitics* 21 (4).
- Tylecote, Radomir; Clark, Robert. 2020. "China's Long March through the International Institutions - and How the UK Should Respond." London.  
<https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/A-Long-March.pdf>.
- Unger, Aryeh L. 2005. "Party and State in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany." *The Political Quarterly* 36 (4).
- Vanbrandwijk, Jacob. 1974. "Perspectives on the Sino-Soviet Dispute." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 1 (2): 140–43.
- Vilmer, Jean-Baptiste J.; Charon, Paul. 2020. "Russia as a Hurricane, China as Climate Change: Different Ways of Information Warfare." *War on the Rocks*. 2020.  
<https://warontherocks.com/2020/01/Russia-as-a-hurricane-china-as-climate-change-different-ways-of-information-warfare/>.
- Voslensky, Michael. 1980. *The Nomenklatura: The Privileged in the USSR (La Nomenklatura: Les Privilégiés En U.R.S.S.)*. Paris: Pierre Belfond.
- Vujacic, Veljko. 2007. "Stalinism and Russian Nationalism: A Reconceptualization." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 23 (2).
- Wachman, Alan M. 2008. *Why Taiwan? Geostrategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Waheed, Ahmed Waqas. 2017. "Pakistan's Dependence and US Patronage: The Politics of 'Limited Influence.'" *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 4 (1): 69–94.
- Waldron, Arthur. 2003. "The Chinese Sickness." *Commentary*. 2003.  
<https://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/highlight/Waldron.pdf>.
- Walker, Rachel. 1989. "Marxism–Leninism as Discourse: The Politics of the Empty Signifier and the Double Bind." *British Journal of Political Science* 19 (2): 161–89.
- Walker, Richard L. 1959. "Taiwan's Development as Free China." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 321: Conte: 122–35.
- Walt, Stephen M. 2018. "Rising Powers and the Risks of War: A Realist View of Sino-

- American Relations.” In *Will China’s Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 13–32. Oxford University Press.
- Wan, Yan; Zhang, Lujia; Xue, Charlie Qiuli; Xiao, Yingbo. 2020. “Djibouti: From a Colonial Fabrication to the Deviation of the ‘Shekou Model.’” *Cities* 97.
- Wang, Fei-ling. 2015. “From Tianxia to Westphalia: The Evolving Chinese Conception of Sovereignty and World Order.” In *America, China, and the Struggle for World Order: Ideas, Traditions, Historical Legacies, and Global Visions*, edited by Feng Ikenberry, John G.; Wang, Jisi; Zhu, 43–68. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wang, Fuchun. 2002. “Daoist Philosophy and Chinese Foreign Policy after the Cold War (道家思想和冷战后的中国外交).” *Aisixiang* (爱思想). 2002.  
<http://www.aisixiang.com/data/73.html>.
- Wang, Gang. 2020. “The Internal Logic between the ‘Chinese System’ and ‘China’s Governance’ (从‘中国之制’到‘中国之治’的内在逻辑).” *Exploration* (探索) 1.
- Wang, Gungwu. 2004. “The Fourth Rise of China: Cultural Implications.” *China: An International Journal* 2.
- . 2019. “China’s Rise This Time Is Different.” *East Asia Forum*. 2019.  
<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/09/29/chinas-rise-this-time-is-different/>.
- Wang, Jianwei. 2017. “The Discourse on China’s Rise.” *China: An International Journal* 15 (1): 24–40.
- Wang, Sixiang. 2023. *Boundless Winds of Empire Rhetoric and Ritual in Early Chosŏn Diplomacy with Ming China*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wang, Weikai. 2020. “Commentary on Party Building: Prospering under Difficulty Depends on the System, the Original Aspiration and the Mission (党建评：多难兴邦 兴靠制度、靠初心、靠使命).” *CPC News*. 2020.  
<http://dangjian.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0210/c117092-31580081.html>.
- Wang, You; Chen, Dingding. 2018. “The Trend and Consequences of the Economic and Strategic ‘Decoupling’ between China and the United States (中美经济与战略‘脱钩’的趋势及影响).” *Contemporary International Relations* (现代国际关系) 7.
- Wang, Yong. 2016. “Offensive for Defensive: The Belt and Road Initiative and China’s New Grand Strategy.” *The Pacific Review* 29 (3): 455–63.
- Ward, Steven. 2017. *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weaver, Duncan. 2020. “Spatiality and World Politics.” *International Studies*. 2020.  
<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-562?print=pdf>.
- Wedeman, Andrew. 2018. “The Rise of Kleptocracy: Does China Fit the Model?” *Journal of Democracy* 29 (1): 86–95.
- Weissman, Mikael. 2015. “Chinese Foreign Policy in a Global Perspective: A Responsible Reformer ‘Striving For Achievement.’” *Journal of China and International Relations* 3 (1): 151–66.
- Wen, Jiabao. 2009. “The Basic Fact That China Is Still A Developing Country Has Not Changed (中国仍是发展中国家的基本事实没有改变).” *China News*. 2009.  
<http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2010/09-23/2550774.shtml>.
- Westad, Odd Arne. 2019. “The Sources of Chinese Conduct: Are Washington and Beijing Fighting a New Cold War?” *Foreign Affairs*, 2019.
- White, James D. 1991. “Chinese Studies of Bukharin.” *Soviet Studies* 43 (4): 733–47.



- White, Lawrence H. 2012. *The Clash of Economic Ideas: The Great Policy Debates and Experiments of the Last Hundred Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Whittaker, Gary R. 2021. "SARS-CoV-2 Spike and Its Adaptable Furin Cleavage Site." *The Lancet*.
- WHO. 2019. "Naming the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and the Virus That Causes It." *World Health Organization*. 2019. [https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/naming-the-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-2019\)-and-the-virus-that-causes-it](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/naming-the-coronavirus-disease-(covid-2019)-and-the-virus-that-causes-it).
- . 2020. "WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020." *World Health Organization*. 2020. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>.
- . 2021. "WHO-Convended Global Study of Origins of SARS-CoV-2: China Part." *World Health Organization*. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/who-convended-global-study-of-origins-of-sars-cov-2-china-part>
- Wildt, Michael. 2019. *Die Ambivalenz Des Volkes: Der Nationalsozialismus Als Gesellschaftsgeschichte*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Wiles, Peter. 1961. "Comment on Tucker's 'Movement-Regimes.'" *American Political Science Review* 55 (2).
- Wirtz, James J.; Russell, James A. 2003. "U.S. Policy on Preventive War and Preemption." *The Nonproliferation Review*.
- Withlock, Craig. 2019. "Stranded Without A Strategy." *The Washington Post*. 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-strategy/>.
- Wittfogel, Karl A. 1951. "The Influence of Leninism-Stalinism on China." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 22–34.
- Wohlforth, William C. 2018. "Not Quite the Same as It Ever Was: Power Shifts and Contestation over the American-Led World Order." In *Will China's Rise Be Peaceful? Security, Stability, and Legitimacy*, edited by Asle Toje, 57–77. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Womack, Brantly. 2005. "Democracy and the Governing Party (执政党): A Theoretical Perspective." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 10 (1): 23 – 42.
- . 2017. "International Crises and China's Rise: Comparing the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the 2017 Global Political Crisis." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10 (4): 383–401.
- Wood, Piers M.; Ferguson, Charles D. 2001. "How China Might Invade Taiwan." *Naval War College Review* 54 (4).
- Worobey, Michael. 2021. "Dissecting the Early COVID-19 Cases in Wuhan." *Science*.
- Worrall, Simon. 2014. "Q&A: China's Collision Between Aspiration and Authoritarianism." *National Geographic*. 2014. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/7/140706-china-beijing-hutong-tiananmen-square-world/>.
- Wright, Mary C. 1955. "From Revolution to Restoration: The Transformation of Kuomintang Ideology." *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 14 (4): 515–32.
- . 1957. *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wu, Cary et al. n.d. "Chinese Citizen Satisfaction with Government Performance during COVID-19." *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- Wu, Guoguang. 2020. "Continuous Purges: Xi's Control of the Public Security Apparatus and

- the Changing Dynamics of CCP Elite Politics.” *China Leadership Monitor*. 2020. <https://www.prcleader.org/wu>.
- Wu, Mark. 2016. “The ‘China, Inc.’ Challenge to Global Trade Governance.” *Harvard International Law Journal* 57 (2): 261–324.
- Wu, Qiuyu. 2018. “Writing A New Chapter on Win-Win Cooperation - Special Report on the Fifth Anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (谱写合作共赢新篇章——一带一路倡议五周年特别报道).” *People’s Daily*. 2018. <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0820/c1002-30237456.html>.
- Wuthnow, Joel; Saunders, Phillip C. 2020. “A More Cohesive Force: Enabling Joint Operations in the PLA.” In *Securing the China Dream: The PLA’s Role in a Time of Reform and Change*, edited by Tiffany Kamphausen, Roy D.; Lai, David; Ma.
- Wylie, Lana; Glidden, Lisa. 2013. “The ‘Cuban Spring’ Fallacy: The Current Incarnation of a Persistent Narrative.” *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 5 (2).
- Xi, Jinping. 1997. “To Be an Ambitious Generation——An Interview with Xi Jinping, Son of Xi Zhongxun (做有志气有作为的一代——习仲勋之子习近平访谈录).” *CSIS Interpret: China*. 2023. <https://interpret.csis.org/translations/to-be-an-ambitious-generation-an-interview-with-xi-jinping-son-of-xi-zhongxun/>.
- . 2014a. “New Asian Security Concept For New Progress in Security Cooperation.” *PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. 2014. [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1159951.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml).
- . 2014b. “Speeches by Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Yu Zhengsheng at the Second Central Xinjiang Work Conference (习近平, 李克强, 俞正声同志在第二次中央新疆工作座谈会的讲话 - 习近平同志的讲话).” *Uyghur Tribunal Proceedings*. <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Transcript-Document-02.pdf>.
- . 2017. “Full Text of Xi Jinping’s Report to the 19th Party Congress (习近平十九大报告全文).” *Xinhua*. 2017. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/19cpcnc/2017-10/27/c\\_1121867529.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/19cpcnc/2017-10/27/c_1121867529.htm).
- . 2018. “At the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs, Xi Jinping Stressed the Adherence to the Socialist Diplomatic Thought with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era (习近平在中央外事工作会议上强调 坚持以新时代中国特色社会主义外交思想为).” *Xinhua*. 2018. [http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/toutiao/201806/t20180623\\_174363.html](http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/toutiao/201806/t20180623_174363.html).
- . 2019a. “Jointly Forging a Bright Future for the ‘Belt and Road’ - Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 2nd ‘Belt and Road’ International Cooperation Summit (齐心开创共建‘一带一路’美好未来——在第二届‘一带一路’国际合作高峰论坛开幕式上的主旨演讲).” *Xinhua*. 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/silkroad/2019-04/26/c\\_1124420187.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/silkroad/2019-04/26/c_1124420187.htm).
- . 2019b. “Remember the Original Aspiration, Promote Self-Revolution (牢记初心使命, 推进自我革命).” *Qiushi Theory* (求是理论网). 2019. [http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2019-07/31/c\\_1124819127.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2019-07/31/c_1124819127.htm).
- . 2019c. “Several Questions on Adhering to and Developing Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (关于坚持和发展中国特色社会主义的几个问题).” *Qiushi Theory* (求是理论网). 2019. [http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2019-04/01/c\\_1124307480.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2019-04/01/c_1124307480.htm).
- . 2019d. “Speech at the Education Work Conference ‘Do Not Forget the Original Aspiration, Remember the Mission’ (在‘不忘初心、牢记使命’主题教育工作会议

- 上的讲话).” *Qiushi Theory* (求是理论网). 2019. [http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2019-07/01/c\\_1124691450.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2019-07/01/c_1124691450.htm).
- . 2020a. “Adhering to and Improving the Socialist System with Chinese Characteristics to Promote the Modernisation of the National Governance System and Governance Capacity (坚持和完善中国特色社会主义制度推进国家治理体系和治理能力现代化).” *Qiushi Theory* (求是理论网). 2020. [http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2020-01/01/c\\_1125402833.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2020-01/01/c_1125402833.htm).
- . 2020b. “Xi Jinping’s Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Talks Anti-Corruption, Referring to the CPC’s Escaping the Historical Cycle (习近平中纪委全会谈反腐 指中共跳出历史周期率).” *DuoWei News* (多维新闻). 2020. <https://www.dwnews.com/中国/60164616/习近平中纪委全会谈反腐指中共跳出历史周期率>.
- . 2021a. “Make Ample Use of Red Resources, Inherit Good Red Genes, and Pass Down the Red Country from Generation to Generation.” *Xinhua*. 2021. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2021-05/15/c\\_1127449609.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2021-05/15/c_1127449609.htm).
- . 2021b. “Xi Jinping’s Speech for the CCP’s 100-Year Anniversary Celebration (习近平：在庆祝中国共产党成立100周年大会上的讲话).” *Xinhua Net*. 2021. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2021-07/15/c\\_1127658385.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2021-07/15/c_1127658385.htm).
- . 2022a. “Xi Jinping Delivery of an Important Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Seminar on Study and Implementation of the Spirit of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Leading Cadres [...].” *PRC GOV*. 2022. [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-01/11/content\\_5667663.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-01/11/content_5667663.htm).
- . 2022b. “正确认识和把握我国发展重大理论和实践问题.” *Qiushi Theory* (求是理论网). 2022. [http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2022-05/15/c\\_1128649331.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2022-05/15/c_1128649331.htm).
- Xie, Chuntao. 2019. “Why the Communist Party of China ‘Can’ (中国共产党为什么‘能’).” *CPC News* (中国共产党新闻网). 2019. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0508/c40531-31072968.html>.
- Xing, Cunhai; Zhang, Ruilian. 2021. “COVID-19 in China: Responses, Challenges and Implications for the Health System.” *Healthcare* 9 (1).
- Xinhua. 2018. “In with the ‘New,’ Out with the ‘Old’ Xi Jinping on the New Party System (立‘新’除‘弊’ 习近平纵论新型政党制度).” *Xinhua*. 2018. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-03/05/c\\_1122491671.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-03/05/c_1122491671.htm).
- . 2019a. “The Belt and Road Initiative Progress, Contributions and Prospects (共建‘一带一路’倡议：进展、贡献与展望).” *Xinhua News*. 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2019-04/22/c\\_1124400071.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2019-04/22/c_1124400071.htm).
- . 2019b. “The Fundamental Guarantee for the Development and Progress of Contemporary China: A Study on Implementating the Spirit of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (当代中国发展进步的根本保障——论深入学习贯彻党的十九届四中全会精神).” *Xinhua*. 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/2019-11/01/c\\_1125183223.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2019-11/01/c_1125183223.htm).
- . 2019c. “Why Marxism ‘Works’ (马克思主义为什么‘行’).” *Xinhua Net*. 2019. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-05/10/c\\_1124476616.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-05/10/c_1124476616.htm).
- . 2020a. “Stay Abreast of the Time and Fight the Disease - On Winning the Battle of Resistance to Control and Halt the Epidemic (同时间赛跑 与病魔较量——论坚决打赢疫情防控阻击战).” *Xinhua*. 2020. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020->

- [02/05/c\\_1125535961.htm](#).
- . 2020b. “Xi Jinping: Relying on the People to Resolutely Win the Resistance War to Prevent and Control Epidemics (习近平：紧紧依靠人民群众坚决打赢疫情防控阻击战).” *People’s Daily*. 2020. <https://wap.peopleapp.com/article/5080135/4975001>.
- XSYZ. 2023. “Xi Jinping Economic Thought Research Centre Organised A Seminar on the In-Depth Study and Interpretation of Xi Jinping’s Economic Thought (习近平经济思想研究中心组织召开深学笃行阐释习近平经济思想研讨会).” *National Development and Reform Commission*. 2023. [https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/wsdwhfz/202309/t20230927\\_1360934.html](https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/wsdwhfz/202309/t20230927_1360934.html).
- Xu, Jian. 2014. “Rethinking China’s Period of Strategic Opportunity.” *China Institute of International Studies*. 2014. [http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2014-05/28/content\\_6942258.htm](http://www.ciis.org.cn/english/2014-05/28/content_6942258.htm).
- Xu, Jin; Du, Zheyuan. 2015. “The Dominant Thinking Sets in Chinese Foreign Policy Research: A Criticism.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8 (3): 251–79.
- Xu, Li. 2019. “为什么说中国共产党‘从革命党向执政党转变’的说法是错误的？.” *Weixin*. 2019. [https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/pv4EvRc7ScBAoK2b\\_wc\\_Fw](https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/pv4EvRc7ScBAoK2b_wc_Fw).
- Xu, Li; Zhu Huan; Zhang, Zhiming. 2019. “Why It Is Wrong to Say That Our Party Changed from a ‘Revolutionary’ to a ‘Ruling Party’? (为什么说我党‘从革命党向执政党转变’的说法是错误的？).” *Qiushi Theory* (求是理论网). 2019. [http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-11/18/c\\_1125243869.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/llwx/2019-11/18/c_1125243869.htm).
- Xu, Liu. 2018. “Interviewing Elites: Methodological Issues Confronting a Novice.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17.
- Xu, Vicky Xiuzhong; Leibold, James; Impiombato, Daria. 2021. “The Architecture of Repression.” *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*. 2021. [https://www.aspi.org.au/report/architecture-repression?\\_cf\\_chl\\_jschl\\_tk=\\_pmd\\_dvL5XBQRUGeH6ughCZ04cL3eJeptcTNEEsMTAeFV23s-1634643196-0-gqNtZGzNAiWjcnBszQqR](https://www.aspi.org.au/report/architecture-repression?_cf_chl_jschl_tk=_pmd_dvL5XBQRUGeH6ughCZ04cL3eJeptcTNEEsMTAeFV23s-1634643196-0-gqNtZGzNAiWjcnBszQqR).
- Xu, Zhangrun. 2019a. “China Is Not a Red Empire (Part 1: The Latent Possibility to Go Astray) (中國不是一個紅色帝國（上篇：誤入歧途的潛在勢能）).” *The Initium* (端傳媒). 2019. <https://theinitium.com/article/20190110-opinion-xuzhangrun-china-red-empire-1/>.
- . 2019b. “China Is Not a Red Empire (Part 2: Blind Spots between Generations and the Philosophy of Struggle) (中國不是一個紅色帝國（下篇：代際盲點與鬥爭哲學）).” *The Initium* (端傳媒). 2019. <https://theinitium.com/article/20190111-opinion-xuzhangrun-china-red-empire-2/>.
- Xuanyan. 2018. “A Teleology of Reform and Opening-up (改革开放天地宽).” *People’s Daily*. 2018. [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-08/13/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20180813\\_6-01.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-08/13/nw.D110000renmrb_20180813_6-01.htm).
- Yan, Shuhan. 2020. “Winning the Development Initiative in Turning Crises into Opportunities (在化危为机中赢得发展主动权).” *CPC News*. 2020. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0416/c40531-31675439.html>.
- Yan, Xuetong. 2014. “From Taoguang Yanghui to Fenfa Youwei (从韬光养晦到奋发有为).” *Journal of International Politics* (国际政治科学) 4: 1 – 35.
- . 2019a. “Reform Can Help China Win Strategic Contest.” *China Daily*. 2019. <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/24/WS5ce72983a3104842260bd78a.html>.



- . 2019b. “The Essence of Political Leadership Is the Capability to Reform (政治领导力的核心是改革能力).” *Aisixiang* (爱思想). 2019. <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/116333.html>.
- Yang, Dali L. 2017a. “China’s Illiberal Regulatory State in Comparative Perspective.” *Chinese Political Science Review* 2: 114–33.
- . 2017b. “China’s Troubled Quest for Order: Leadership, Organization and the Contradictions of the Stability Maintenance Regime.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26 (103): 35–53.
- Yang, Sheng. 2019. “Xi: Another Long March Begins.” *Global Times*. 2019. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1151300.shtml>.
- Ye, Min. 2015. “China and Competing Cooperation in Asia-Pacific: TPP, RCEP, and the New Silk Road.” *Asian Security* 11 (3).
- . 2019. “Fragmentation and Mobilization: Domestic Politics of the Belt and Road in China.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 28 (119).
- Ye, Xiaodi. 2019. “Rediscovering the Transition in China’s National Interest: A Neoclassical Realist Approach.” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*.
- Yi, Bei. 2020. “‘A 600-Person Dormitory’: Life Inside a Wuhan ‘Fangcang’ Hospital.” *Sixth Tone*. 2020. <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005523/a-600-person-dormitory-life-inside-a-wuhan-fangcang-hospital>.
- Yu, Jie. 2019. “China’s Belt and Road Plan Hobbled by Ironies and Mismatches.” *Financial Times*. 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/26280f16-9a53-11e8-9702-5946bae86e6d>.
- Yu, Mingsong. 2018. “The Historical and Cultural Foundations of Cultural Self-Confidence (文化自信的历史文化根基).” *People’s Daily*. 2018. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0515/c40531-29992075.html>.
- Yuan, Peng. 2020. “The Novel Coronavirus and Changes Unseen in a Century (新冠疫情与百年变局).” *Aisixiang*. 2020. <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/121742.html>.
- Yuan, Ye. 2021. “To Improve Governance, China Ups Control Over Its Grassroots.” *Sixth Tone*. 2021. <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1007977/to-improve-governance%2C-china-ups-control-over-its-grassroots>.
- Yue, Fenglan. 2019. “People’s Daily Theory Series: From A Dialectic [Perspective] Interpreting Opportunity (人民日报思想纵横：辩证看机遇).” *People’s Daily*. 2019. <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0522/c1003-31096535.html>.
- Yurchak, Alexei. 2006. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zakaria, Fareed. 2009. *Post-American World and the Rise of the Rest*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Zanasi, Margherita. 2006. *Saving the Nation: Economic Modernity in Republican China*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Zelikow, Philip. 2016. “The Nature of History’s Lessons.” In *The Power of the Past: History and Statecraft*, edited by Jeremi Brands, Hal; Suri. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Zeng, Jinghan. 2014. “The Debate on Regime Legitimacy in China: Bridging the Wide Gulf between Western and Chinese Scholarship.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 23 (88): 612–35.
- . 2016. *The Chinese Communist Party’s Capacity to Rule: Ideology, Legitimacy and Party Cohesion*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2020. *Slogan Politics: Understanding Chinese Foreign Policy Concepts*. London:

- Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zeng, Jinghan; Jones, Lee. 2019. "Understanding China's 'Belt and Road Initiative': Beyond 'Grand Strategy' to a State Transformation Analysis." *Third World Quarterly*, 1–28.
- Zeng, Jinghan; Xiao, Yuefan; Breslin, Shaun. 2015. "Securing China's Core Interests: The State of the Debate in China." *International Affairs* 91 (2): 245–66.
- Zeng, Lingliang. 2016. "Conceptual Analysis of China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Road towards a Regional Community of Common Destiny." *Chinese Journal of International Law* 15 (3): 517–41.
- Zhang, Chenchen. 2020. "Covid-19 in China: From 'Chernobyl Moment' to Impetus for Nationalism." *Made in China Journal*. 2020.  
<https://madeinchinajournal.com/2020/05/04/covid-19-in-china-from-chernobyl-moment-to-impetus-for-nationalism/>.
- Zhang, Denghua. 2018. "The Concept of 'Community of Common Destiny' in China's Diplomacy: Meaning, Motives and Implications." *Asia & The Pacific Policy Studies* 5 (2).
- Zhang, Dewang. 2019. *Pathways and Choices: The May Fourth Movement Acts as the Starting Point for Contemporary Chinese History* (道路与选择: 作为现代中国历史起点的五四运动). Chengdu: Tiandu Press (天地出版社).
- Zhang, Falin. 2021. "Rising Illusion and Illusion of Rising: Mapping Global Financial Governance and Relocating China." *International Studies Review* 23 (1).
- Zhang, Jun. 2019. "The Real Reason for China's Rise." *Project Syndicate*. 2019.  
<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-liberalization-structural-reform-drives-growth-by-zhang-jun-2019-08>.
- Zhang, Rui. 2021. "How Media Politicize COVID-19 Lockdowns: A Case Study Comparing Frame Use in the Coverage of Wuhan and Italy Lockdowns by The New York Times." *Media Asia* 48 (2).
- Zhang, Xiaojing; Chang, Xin. 2015. *The Logic of Economic Reform in China*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press (中国社会科学出版社).
- Zhang, Xuebo. 2017. "Historical Observations on Governing the Country by Document: 1982-2017 (文件治国的历史观察: 1982—2017)." *Academics* (学术界) 9 (232).
- Zhang, Yongjin. 2016. "Ambivalent Sovereignty: China and Re-Imagining the Westphalian Ideal." In *Re-Envisioning Sovereignty: The End of Westphalia?*, edited by Charles Jacobsen, Trudy; Sampford, 101–17. London: Routledge.
- Zhang, Zhixin. 2018. "The Belt and Road Initiative: China's New Geopolitical Reality?" Berlin.
- Zhao, Suisheng. 2010. "The China Model: Can It Replace the Western Model of Modernization?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 19 (65): 419–36.
- . 2016. "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival." *Journal of Democracy* 27 (3): 83–97.
- . 2018. "A Revisionist Stakeholder: China and the Post-World II World Order." *Journal of Contemporary China*.
- . 2020. "China's Belt and Road Initiative as the Signature of President Xi Jinping Diplomacy: Easier Said than Done." *Journal of Contemporary China* 29 (123).
- Zheng, Bijian. 2013. *China's Road to Peaceful Rise: Observations on Its Cause, Basis, Connotation and Prospect*. London: Routledge.
- Zheng, Chen. 2016. "China Debates the Non-Interference Principle." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 349–74.
- Zheng, Shiping. 1997. *Party vs. State in Post-1949 China: The Institutional Dilemma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Zheng, Yongnian. 2010. *The Chinese Communist Party as Organizational Emperor: Culture, Reproduction, and Transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Zhong, Rui. 2022. "Writing About China Begins and Ends with the Chinese People." *World Politics Review*. 2022.
- Zhou, Dongxin. 2021. "PRC Medical Internationalism: From Cold War to Covid-19." *AriScope*. 2021. <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/ariscopes/prc-medical-internationalism-from-cold-war-to-covid-19/>.
- Zhou, Xianxin; Xu, Shuangshuang. 2019. "On the Evolution of the Main Social Contradiction and the Intrinsic Logic of China's Third Great Leap: A Tribute to the 70th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China (论社会主要矛盾演进与我国三次‘起来’伟大飞跃的内在逻辑)." *Theoretical Investigation* (理论探讨) 4 (209): 5 – 11.
- Zoellick, Robert. 2005. "Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility." *Remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations*. 2005. <https://www.ncuscr.org/content/robert-zoellicks-responsible-stakeholder-speech>.
- Zou, Yizheng; Jones, Lee. 2019. "China's Response to Threats to Its Overseas Economic Interests: Softening Non-Interference and Cultivating Hegemony." *Journal of Contemporary China* 29 (121).
- Zuallaert, Jeroen. 2018. "Knacks Man van Het Jaar: Xi Jinping, de Onbetwiste Leider (Knack's Man of the Year: Xi Jinping, the Undisputed Leader)." *Knack*. 2018. <https://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/knacks-man-van-het-jaar-xi-jinping-de-onbetwiste-wereldleider/article-longread-1402003.html>.