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The People's Republic of China and the Global Class War

Collin L. Chambers
Syracuse University

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to provide a more sufficient understanding of post-reform China's position in global political economic space than the understandings and conceptions that currently exist in geography and the broader critical social sciences and humanities. This thesis argues that post-reform China is best understood through the global class war framework. The global class war does not conceive post-reform China as "imperialist," "neoliberal," or even "capitalist." Instead the framework understands post-reform China as a social formation that is simply attempting to arise within a global political economic system that is dominated by the global imperialist class camp. Additionally, the global class war sees China's state apparatus and the Chinese Communist Party as agents that actually resist neoliberalism in general, rather than being "neoliberal." This thesis also argues that the Chinese Communist Party should be at the center of any analysis of China's political economy because of the role the Party plays in the Chinese social formation historically and presently.

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE GLOBAL CLASS WAR

by

Collin L. Chambers

A.A., Onondaga Community College, 2013

B.A., Syracuse University, 2015

Thesis

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class” –Mao Zedong, 1937

I. Introduction to the Introduction

In June 2012 I was standing in a long, seemingly never-ending line in Tiananmen Square, Beijing outside Mao’s Mausoleum. Everyday people from all over China, and the world, come to Tiananmen Square to pay their respects to Mao Zedong, the founder of the People’s Republic of China, by viewing him in his embalming and putting a flower beside him. While I was standing in line with flower in hand and a hammer and sickle T-shirt on (to match the flag Mao is wrapped in in his casket), a person, most likely from the countryside, patted my back and smiled while looking at my shirt and the flower in my hand. As I learned, lines to see Mao Zedong were like this on a daily basis, and it is not just some tourist site. People from the countryside – who do not necessarily have the financial means – make “the pilgrimage” to Beijing to see the body of the founder of their country and a person who helped radically change the course of China’s history. It was after my month-long trip to China as an 18 year old that I began to read and understand the history of revolutionary China. I was always skeptical of how China was viewed by bourgeois mouthpieces in the West. However, it was also during this time that made me question how progressives *and Marxists* in the United States – at both a popular and academic level – view and interpret China in general, and post-reform China more specifically. After visiting China from urban campuses to the rural countryside I came to learn that the people of China still have great admiration of Mao Zedong. For example, in the countryside, portraits of Mao still hang in people’s houses, restaurants, etc. In the urban areas and college campuses, where more historically privileged sectors of the population reside, responses to questions about Mao are uneven and more complex and critical. However, some of the common things most of

the people I talked to in China said are: 1) they often question the presence of the United States in Asian affairs; and 2) they look at Mao and the revolutionary period as time which had its share of problems, but was necessary in order to create the foundations for their country.

II. Context

My month-long trip to China in 2012 changed my life and inspired this project. The numerous things I saw and observed contradicted what I heard about China growing up in the United States, and even things I have read and heard from certain progressive groups and Marxists. Thus, this thesis argues that we should understand China in general and post-reform China more specifically through the lens of the global class war. While the global class war perspective is beginning to emerge in academia in some places (e.g., Malott and Ford 2015), it is largely unengaged with in academia in general and within geography more specifically. Chapter four will provide an explication of what the global class war entails and how it has come about historically. This thesis also argues that we should pay particular attention to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) when analyzing the People's Republic of China (PRC) because of the role it plays in the Chinese social formation in general and in the global class war. I will do this by first exploring how China has been studied and the perspectives in geography from George Cressey's time to the present. Then, I will explore the different perspectives on post-reform China in the broader social sciences and humanities. Thirdly, I will lay out the global class war framework, and finally critically analyze the CCP.

This project will hopefully be of both academic and practical (i.e., political) significance to readers by changing how people who are both inside and outside of academia understand, view, *and critique* the People's Republic of China. Classifying and representing the Peoples Republic of China has real material and political consequences for not just the people of China,

but for the global proletarian class camp. There are many differing views on what type of economy exists within China, thus there is necessity of creating a strong theoretical formulation of post-reform China that synthesizes these differing formulations.

China is talked about on the news, in academia, in popular politics, and everyday life on a daily basis. Better understanding China's position within global space, and the *global class war*, is of utmost importance if we are going to avoid another world war between "two superpowers." As McInerney (2012) powerfully argues in *China: Revolution and Counterrevolution*, the overthrow of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) by forces of domestic counterrevolution – forces that would be supported by US imperialism – would mark an historic setback for the Chinese people, particularly the working and peasant classes. This project's intended impact is of course to remain critical of the developmental methods of the CCP, but always keeping the global class war in mind while doing so i.e., not adding to the imperialist demonization campaigns that whips up war feeling. Seeing the PRC and the CCP through a global class war lens will be able to provide a resource for revolutionary scholars, and for progressive/revolutionary organizations to use during times of imperialist demonization campaigns of China, and threats of war.

Albert Szymanski's (1983) study on the political economy of the Soviet Union was written during a time when the USSR still existed as an economic and political entity, but it was also a time when radical leftists were declaring that capitalism had been restored in the Soviet Union and that it was "social imperialist." To decipher if the Soviet Union was in fact "capitalist," Szymanski conducted a scientific study and clarified what certain terms meant like "capitalism," "socialism," "ownership," "control," etc., from a Marxist perspective. To see if the laws of capitalist value relations in fact dominated the Soviet Union, as is the case under

capitalism, he examines studies done by Western economists on the role of commodity, capital, and labor markets in the Soviet Union, and the role of the state. He examines empirical research done by both Soviet and Western social scientists on questions of social stratification, to see if classes similar to the west exist. In later chapters he examines Soviet foreign relations to see if the USSR is in fact “social imperialist.” From his study he concludes that the existence of some capitalist characteristics, but in no way concludes that they dominate. For example, he recognized the material and political constraints a socialist society surrounded by a capitalist world has to deal with. The “necessity to develop industrially, to feed the people, to protect itself [from] capitalist countries, imposes a fairly limited set of options on a socialist power elite...[they] are dictated by the situation” (Szymanski 1983, 28). In the age of global capitalism and imperialism, Szymanski showed, installing some capitalist methods does not mean the restoration of capitalism. We cannot understand the current era of imperialism by examining “the economic features of an individual country in isolation.” Instead, we have to look at a country’s position in relation the global economic system and in relation to the group of countries “that dominant the world order and set its rules” (Becker and Puryear 2015, 61).

This study of China will attempt to do a similar analysis as sociologist Szymanski’s (1983) study of the political economy of the former Soviet Union. Here we will attempt to decipher if capitalism dominates in China, and critique existing perspectives on post-reform China within geography and the broader social sciences and humanities. For example, one term that one sees often – especially in geography – when critiquing contemporary China is “neoliberal.” The term “neoliberalism” is used quite often in all sorts of studies within the social sciences. However often times scholars use terms such as “neoliberal” and “neoliberalization” without giving room in their study to concretely explain what they mean by it. Neoliberalism is

more of a buzzword than anything (Rowlands and Rawolle 2013). It is also often used to romanticize the past and the “good days” of the welfare capitalist state and Keynesianism or it is seen as the “root of all of our problems,” rather than capitalism itself being the root of our problems (e.g., Monbiot 2016). This project will attempt to critique conceptions of China as “neoliberal,” (e.g., Harvey 2005; Wang 2003, 2005) and offer a global class war perspective of neoliberalism to see that the Chinese state apparatus and the Chinese Communist Party are agents in global political economic space that “actually resist neoliberalism” (Ford 2017).

III. Road Map

In the next chapter (chapter two), I will explore and critique some of the ways geographers have studied and interpreted China from George Cressey’s time to the present. Two of the key geographic formulations of post-reform China examined and critiqued in this chapter are Harvey’s (2005) declaration that China is “neoliberal albeit with Chinese characteristics,” and Peck and Zhang’s (2013) conceptualizing contemporary China as a “combination of socialism and capitalism” through the Varieties of Capitalism(s) framework. I argue that geographic formulations of China are lacking critical insight and this leads to the third chapter where I explore how the broader social sciences and humanities have interpreted post-reform China.

In chapter three, I explore the profuse critiques and formulations of post-reform China that exist outside the limited constraints of geography. Here I explicate how Marxists and Maoists in the West have analyzed and critiqued China, how “New Left” in China critiques the reform era and the ways they conceive how the exploitative relations that have developed in China since the reforms can come to an end. I also examine the arguments made by the upholders of the “Chinese Model” which attempt to justify the reforms that began in 1978 under

Deng Xiaoping and the Eastern European economists who theorize about the need for reforming “state socialism.” Additionally, I explicate how scholars working within the World Systems Theory approach under China in global political economic space.

In chapter four, I argue that, though there are many perspectives on post-reform China that provide interesting insights, we should instead critique and analyze China through the global class war framework. In this chapter I layout the global class war framework and apply it to understand post-reform China through analyzing the newly established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). I attempt to decipher if the capitalist or socialist mode of production dominates in contemporary China by looking at how the Chinese state apparatus dealt with the 2007-2008 international economic crisis.

In the final substantive chapter, I explore historical intricacies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). I focus on the CCP in this chapter because the CCP has a determining influence on the nature of the Chinese social formation, it is a key agent in the global class war, and it is a force that “actually resists neoliberalism” (Ford 2017). I examine the historical and contemporary “line struggles” within the CCP that have helped shape the nature of the Chinese social formation, and argue that we should still have faith in the Party in creating change in contemporary China.

I conclude by reminding my readers of the global class war theoretical framework that I argue is best to understand post-reform China and that in any analysis of Communist China’s political economy it must incorporate the Chinese Communist Party to some degree because of the role it plays in Communist China’s social formation.

In sum, this thesis seeks to theorize post-reform China within the global class war theoretical framework and specifically from the perspective of the global proletarian class camp.

Since capital has become truly international, this thesis treats the international situation as the “primary contradiction,” as Mao would say. Thus, we should analyze the class struggle on the global scale, and relate the class struggles that occur at other smaller scales back to the global scale. The global class framework puts the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) state apparatus and the CCP within the global proletarian class camp (the agents within the global proletarian class camp will be explicated in chapter four). The global class war allows us to see that the success of one agent within a global class camp is tied and interconnected to the overall strength of the particular global class camp. Despite the flaws of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics,” and the contemporary CCP, this thesis offers a different form of analysis and critique of the contemporary “Chinese model;” one that does not fall in the line with the global imperialist class camp.

Chapter Two: The Ghost of George Cressey

I. Introduction

Though there is great intellectual and political importance in studying and understanding the People's Republic of China (PRC), there has only relatively recently been an upsurge in research projects that are on the PRC within geography. The year 1978, when the PRC opened up its coastal cities to the global capitalist system, marks a key event, or rupture, where geographic studies on China began to increase substantially (Lin 2002). Of course, there were geographic studies produced on China during the revolutionary Maoist years (1949-1976) (e.g. Tregear 1965), and even before the revolution (e.g. Cressey 1934), but these studies remain within the archaic paradigms of regionalism and idiographic study. Understandably, during this time, so little was known in the West about China, idiographic inquiry was of utmost necessity because it opened up the West to new facts and knowledges about the landscape, people, and economy. Nonetheless, the information gathered by these geographers is information one can simply look up online nowadays.

Despite geographic work on China being on the rise since 1978, there is much truth to what Cressey (1934, viii) said over 80 years ago, that "so little is actually known about [China]...that it will be many years before an adequate treatment of it will be possible." His statement is true not in the sense that we do not have enough rich empirical studies that are filled with concrete economic and political realities in China, but in the sense that we are lacking in theoretical frameworks, that exist on the global scale, to explain what shapes and changes the internal and external political economy of China. Said in another way, though the political economy of China is being explained at a higher level of abstraction with the contemporary application of the Variety of Capitalism(s) (VoCs) theoretical framework (see Lim 2014; Peck

and Zhang 2013), to explain what the relationship is between global capitalist economic forces and the dynamic economic and political shifts that occur in China's political economy, we are still lacking theoretical tools to understand China's political and economic position in global space. This epistemological and theoretical gap is, I argue, a result of the absence of radical/critical geographic studies on China during the revolutionary and Maoist period (1949-1976). This absence is due to three main things: (1) the dominant paradigms within the discipline of geography itself during the revolutionary Maoist years; (2) the anti-communist ideology that dominates the US academy, and society in general; and (3) the difficulty of access inside of China for Western scholars, especially during the period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which occurred between 1966 and 1976 (Murphey 1973, 101-102). Because geographic studies were scarce during this dynamic and important time, geographers had to look and glean from Sinologists who did work on China during the revolutionary period. This work *tended* to be explicitly or implicitly anti-communist, and thus naturally affects the way geographers perceive political and economic policies such as the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In this chapter I attempt to showcase the theoretical shortcomings of economic and human geographers who have studied the PRC since its establishment in 1949. I will do this by first explicating how the PRC has been studied and how knowledge is produced about it within human and economic geography through time by showcasing its own internal movements and arguments. For example, I will ask what kind of theoretical frameworks are employed historically to understand the political economy of the PRC, and how these theoretical frameworks influenced the conclusions geographers made about political and economic relations in China. To be more precise, this chapter uses Lin's (2002, 1811) method of interpreting China

geography's evolving discourses and their shifting emphasis "as the result of incessant negotiation between the professional geographers and the ever-changing social contexts, which include mainstream geography in the West, on the one hand, and the dynamic Chinese political economy on the other." To help me with this, I will divide the historical geographical methods of studying the PRC into three periods. The first period begins in 1949 with the establishment of the People's Republic to the end of the Maoist era in 1978.¹ The second period will begin with the capitalist reforms and 'opening up' of China in 1978 until the early 2000s. I use this seemingly generic time period because the early 2000s marks a time when there was a call for China geographers "to go out of the ivory tower of area studies and explain to the general audience the meanings of the transformation of a gigantic space economy in terms of both its implications for the globalizing world and the advancement of knowledge in geography and the social sciences at large" (Lin 2002, 1827). China's induction into the WTO in 2001 began the process of a dynamic shift in the space economy of China that created an even more dramatic change than the initial reforms did in 1978. Thus, the mid 2000s marks a rupture within economic and human geographic study on China, where geographers begin to 'scale up' theoretically to make sense of post-reform China, and to find common *logics* with other developing and transitional economies.

The third temporal period I will study will be from the mid-2000s to the present time, and will begin with Yueng and Lin's (2003) call for economic geographers to "theorize back" and to employ a form of reflexivity to study the political economy of the PRC. This initiative involves the development of new theories that are grounded in the realities particular to China and other Asian countries, and not just applying theories that were created in the West. This section will

¹ This first period in the study of geographic formulations of China will critically engage with pre-revolutionary geographic studies of China i.e., before 1949 (e.g., Cressey 1934).

involve an explication of the two dominant theoretical frameworks to understand post-reform China: the neoliberal framework and the Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) theoretical framework.

While going through key pieces of past literature within human and economic geography on the PRC, I will begin to critique Harvey's conception of China as neoliberal, "albeit with 'Chinese characteristics'" (Harvey 2005, 144)². In addition, I will critique his "spatial-fix" theory of how capital temporarily solves its periodic crisis of overaccumulation (Harvey 1982). The "spatial-fix" discourse on China tends to abstract away from the developments made by the PRC during the revolutionary socialist period that created the material foundation for the PRC to become a space that was attractive to Western capital. I will argue that if it were not for the developments made during this period, global capital would have not been able to temporarily "spatially-fix" itself with surplus capital investment in post-reform China. Finally, I will then conclude where future research on the PRC in geography should go, and how any critical engagement on the political economy of the PRC should always keep the global class war in mind when doing so. Though the global class war theoretical perspective will be explored in detail in a later chapter, a brief formulation of the perspective can be defined as an insistence that global political space can be divided historically and contemporarily into two global class camps: the imperialist global class camp which include the imperial states (headed by the US) and their allies (i.e., the forces of capital expansion and dispossession); and the proletarian global class camp which is includes the international proletariat *and their states* i.e., the states that the proletariat control (Marcy 1979).³ The proletarian global class camp was headed historically by USSR, but now by socialist states such as Cuba, Venezuela, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), etc. This camp also includes nationalist states (such as Syria, Russia,

² Why I specifically focus on David Harvey will be explored below.

³ The proletariat "controls" these states in the sense that their political, economic, and ideological interests reign supreme over the class interests of the bourgeoisie and other classes.

Bolivia, Iran, etc.) because they are apart of the broader forces that counter imperialism's drive for unipolar power in global politics and economics.

II. Economic/Human Geography and China: 1978 to early 2000s

“It is now clearly evident that China is not highly mineralized, and her world rank is that of a minor nation. The available reserves are such that a great development may take place compared with the present, but there seems little possibility that China will ever rival the industrial areas of Eastern North America or Western Europe” (Cressey 1934, 110)

Before diving into some specific early studies in the post-reform period in China, we must briefly showcase what economic and human geographers inherited from studies completed by geographers before 1949 and during the era when Maoist ideology was dominant in economic, social and political development within the PRC. Much of the early work produced on China within human geography before 1949 deploys paradigms that focus on two central concepts: region and natural environment (March 1974). March (1974, 8) describes a region as an “area within which certain generalisations apply and a unit of geographic comparison,” and the natural environment as “the physical universe with which societies interact but excluding the parts under their purposeful control—the tame or gardened parts.” It is within these “physical and cultural regions that geographers and others have often set about explaining differences among societies by differences in natural environment, whether by a crude ‘environmental determinism’ or in a more sophisticated ‘cultural ecology’” (March 1974, 8).

An example of a geographer deploying these concepts to understand China is George Cressey (1934, 3-4); one of the most famous American China geographers in the 1930s and 1940s, who was criticized heavily both in the United States and by Chinese communists (Herman 1965, 361). Cressey wrote that China's “cheerful peasants” have lived in “biophysical unity” with nature for centuries. The people of China “live so close to nature” that “an

appreciation of geography is fundamental in understanding human affairs” in China. Thus it is of utmost importance to stress the “environmental restrictions [that] envelop Chinese life” (Cressey 1934, vii-viii). Cressey (1955: 130, 347) concludes that because of China’s geographical restrictions and limited mineral deposits, China will *never* be able to “develop a great industrial society.” Additionally, Cressey argues, China’s environment forces agriculture to be at the center of its economy. Unfortunately however, the root of China not being able to industrialize is within China’s agricultural system itself. For Cressey, and other geographers of the time, China cannot mobilize enough capital to industrialize because China cannot feed itself. Cressey (1955, 101-102) states, in a Malthusian and environmental determinist fashion:

Population presses inexorably on the food supply... From the viewpoint of geography, the basic facts are the limited extent of good land and the restrictions of soil and climate. Any program of improvement must start from the fact that there is only half an acre of good land per capita.

March (1974, 108) describes this formulation by Cressey, “with all [its] geographic, economic, and political crudity,” as material for “American prejudices” that helps provide another “rationale for the US presence in East and South Asia.” It is this type of work that dominates China geography during the 1930s and 1940s.

With the wholesale change in China’s dominant mode of production in 1949, Western geographic thought on China had to catch up in the sense that socialist economic and social development were bypassing the environmental and geographical barriers to industrial development that Cressey (1934, 1955) pointed out. For Mao and the Chinese communists, the answer to geographical and environmental problems “lies in revolutionary social change which alone can open up the productive potential of the people and the environment” (March 1974, 111). Not only were the economic and political realities of Maoist China contradicting many of

the geographic formulations made by Cressey and others, but also the works from the likes of Stalin and Mao began to be read to understand geography in relation to China in a new way (e.g., Murphey 1954). Many of these works written by communist theoreticians on geography and the environment were written during the same time as the environmental determinists were writing. For example, Stalin *in 1938* stated:

Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society, and, of course, influences the development of society, accelerates or retards its development. But its influence is not the *determining* influence, inasmuch as the changes and development of society proceed at an incomparably faster rate than the changes and development of geographical environment (Stalin 1938/1972, 316, emphasis in original).

Mao Zedong emphasized that through revolution, the socialist development of the productive forces, and the sheer will of the people any geographical/environmental barrier could be transcended. Mao in *On Contradiction* (1937/1966, 27) also counters environmental determinist theories by pointing out that: “[l]ong dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate.” With the rise of socialist China, one could see that China was not the country that had a problem taking care of its population as Cressey (1955) suggests, but, on the contrary, it was the US and other capitalist countries that were in fact overpopulated in the sense that in these countries there existed unemployment and starvation. Their social systems prevented them from mobilizing their productive capacities to feed and employ their people. While the Maoist period had its share of difficulties, in particular during the Great Leap Forward where there was famine, it is important to emphasize that the famine did not occur due to the *logics* of the socialist social system itself,

as is the case with capitalist countries. Mao even “admitted that problems had occurred in this period [(1958-1961)]. However, he blamed the majority of these difficulties on bad weather and natural disasters. He admitted that there had been policy errors too, which he took responsibility for” (Ball 2007).⁴

Based on Cressey’s work on China it is clear as day that he did not engage with alternative (i.e., Marxist) ways of thinking about geography and the environment. The works of Stalin and others were available to him that challenged the dominant conceptions within geography. However, the fruition of the communist revolution in China played a major role in changing the dominant paradigm within geography. The 1949 revolution forced China geographers to engage with Marxist thought (see Murphey (1954) where he cites Marx on a number of occasions).

⁴ See Ball’s (2007) *Monthly Review* article titled “Did Mao Really Kill Millions in the Great Leap Forward?” In the article Ball questions some of the demographic statistics taken in China during the 1950s and 1960s, and dives into the politics involved in the framing Maoist policies in post-Mao China and in the anti-communist West. Ball writes: “Evidence from peasants contradicts the claim that Mao was mainly to blame for the deaths that did occur during the Great Leap Forward period.” Ball shows this by referencing a study done by Professor Han Dongping who traveled to Shandong and Henan long after the death of Mao Zedong, where the famine hit the worst between 1959 and 1961: “Han Dongping found that most of the farmers he questioned...did not think Mao was mainly to blame for the problems they suffered during the Great Leap Forward. This is not to say that tragic errors did not occur. Dongping wrote of the introduction of communal eating in the rural communes. To begin with, this was a very popular policy among the peasants. Indeed, in 1958 many farmers report that they had never eaten so well in their lives before. The problem was that this new, seeming abundance led to carelessness in the harvesting and consumption of food. People seemed to have started assuming that the government could guarantee food supplies and that they did not have responsibility themselves for food security. Given the poverty of China in the late 1950s this was an error that was bound to lead to serious problems and the Communist leadership should have taken quicker steps to rectify it. Three years of awful natural disasters made things much worse. Solidarity between commune members in the worst effected regions broke down as individuals tried to seize crops before they were harvested. Again, this practice made a bad situation worse. However, it must be stressed that the farmers themselves did not tell Han Dongping that errors in the organisation of communal eating were the main cause of the famine they suffered. Han Dongping, himself, severely criticizes Mao for the consequences of his ‘hasty’ policies during the Great Leap Forward. However he also writes ‘I have interviewed numerous workers and farmers in Shandong, Henan, and I never met one farmer or worker who said that Mao was bad. I also talked to one scholar in Anhui [where the famine is alleged to have been most serious-Joseph Ball] who happened to grow up in rural areas and had been doing research in the Anhui, he never met one farmer that said Mao was bad nor a farmer who said Deng [Xiaoping] was good.’”

The successes of the first Chinese five year plan (1953-1957) brought about immense changes to China's landscape and created the conditions for China geographers to explore the new geographies produced from socialist economic and social development. These studies, however, were produced from mostly outside China itself, and thus had to rely purely on statistics, news sources, and propaganda material from the Chinese communists (Lin 2002). In his review of geographic work on China, KS Chang (1975, 4-5) states that:

[T]he major research works in the middle fifties concentrated on the reappraisal of China's resource foundations, progress made in transportation, redistribution of industries and urban growth in the major cities; and in the late fifties on flood control, water resources and desert studies. The prominence given to these topics was undoubtedly a reflection of the intense activity in the construction of the various trunkline railroads and highways, the prospecting of petroleum, coal and iron ore, and the much publicized efforts to tame [various major river systems in China].

Studies done on China in the 1950's—though they were no longer environmental deterministic—still describes China and its leaders in a cynical fashion, and use geographical features to question the developmental strategies deployed by the CCP, without taking in account for the *global systems* that influences and shapes what occurs in China. For example, Murphey (1956) states that the Chinese People's government is “emotionally nationalistic” which leads to “uneconomic ventures” in attempting to “build up the northwest and its trade at the expense of the coast, and by constructing railroads through its landward border zone of desert to strengthen China's link with the Soviet bloc” (Murphey 1956, 27-28). These initiatives go against China's “natural advantages” in water transport that comes from its extensive eastern coasts, where it would be economically more viable to create trading networks via water with countries such as Japan, Western Europe, and the United States. Murphey (1956, 27) concludes by stating that:

“these transport connections with [these countries] are...superior in every way to a desert railway across the breadth of Eurasia.”

As already stated, the dominant paradigm within the discipline of geography during the revolutionary socialist years between 1949-1976, made it difficult to understand the logics of socialist development, and access to field work and data collection was difficult because of the political tensions between the West and communist countries during the Cold War. For example, in Chiao-Min Hsieh's (1967) book *China: Ageless Land and Countless People*, written at the start of the Cultural Revolution is extremely critical of the Chinese Communist Party, if not clearly anti-communist (see Hsieh 1967, 105-129). Instead of focusing on the radical economic, social, and political events that took place at the time, Hsieh focuses on the traditional geography of China (location, historical capitals, etc.), and the population. However, there is some nuance in his work on the population in China in the sense that he acknowledges how, through central planning and economic development, the Chinese have been able to relieve the pressure from the population in the southeast coastal region by developing the remote northwest region through irrigation projects (Hsieh 1967, 69).

When China politically reopened to capitalist countries in 1972 with the visits of President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, “scarcely more than a dozen Western geographers [who were]...Anglo-American, *non-communist* European, Australian and New Zealand professional geographers” came into China to tour the mainland, but “few among them...stayed longer than three months” (KS Chang 1975, 2, my emphasis). Consequently, geographic studies on China during the revolutionary period were largely historical studies produced with data that was obtained before the communist revolution in 1949, or were performed from the outside of the PRC itself (e.g., KS Chang 1970; SD Chang 1963, 1970; Ma 1971; Wheatley 1971).

Doing primarily historical work from the outside of China with data obtained from before the revolution, led these geographers to believe that the city was the center of change in China (Ma 1971), and that urbanization was driven by economic developments (Chang 1963, 1981). One key and important insight that came out the work from this time period, that still influences economic and human geographic study on the PRC today, however, is that Chinese urbanism is *distinct* from Western urbanism (Murphey 1954). For example, Murphey (1954, 353) states that:

In China, while the peasant and the countryside were in some respects like the West, the city's role was fundamentally different. Chinese cities were administrative centers. With few exceptions this function dominated their lives whatever their other bases in trade or manufacturing. Their remarkably consistent, uniform plan, square or rectangular walls surrounding a great cross with gates at each of the four arms, suggests their common administrative creation and their continued expression of this function.

Though China's urbanization process is different than urbanization in Western capitalist countries, cities in China still represented a space for change because the large urban port cities such as Canton (Guangzhou) and Shanghai had direct connections with foreign powers which played a role in changing and shaping these urban centers.

a. Modernization and (Anti-) Urbanism: From Maoism to 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'

“The Chinese revolution aimed to destroy the city, and then to re-mold it. Instead it appears that the city threatens to destroy the revolution” (Murphey 1980, 149)

Upon the economic opening up of the PRC in 1978, some geographers began to go into China to study its people, history, and political economy. As they studied urbanism and the history of the PRC during the revolutionary years some of their preconceived theoretical notions of China were challenged. In particular conceptions of the city being the center of change in China was problematized. For example, Lin (2002, 1818-1819) points out that:

The city in China had not been seen by Mao and many of his comrades as the center of change. On the contrary, the city was viewed as a consuming and parasitic entity where foreign imperialism was rooted and upon which Party elites with capitalist inclinations had been based. The city in Mao's China had therefore been subject to the transformation from consumption to production. Instead of promoting urbanization, the Communist regime under Mao had launched campaigns to send millions of urban educated young people to the countryside. The result had been limited urbanization despite the fact that the country had undergone significant industrialization. In other words, China demonstrated a peculiar pattern in which industrialization did not necessarily result in large scale urbanization.

Why the city was not the center for political and economic change during the Maoist era is relatively easy to see if one looks to the history of China during the Civil War between the communists and nationalists. During the period of the Civil War (1927-1950), the cities were places where the nationalists were the strongest. Communists had difficulty organizing in the cities, and were often suppressed violently by the nationalist government. For example, in Shanghai in 1927 thousands of communists were rounded up and systemically killed by the conservative faction of the Nationalist Party headed Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) then had to relocate to organize politically in the countryside (Meisner 1999, 20-30). Chinese communists were historically more popular in the countryside (where most of the population was) than the nationalists were, so the retreat to organize in the countryside was not a major setback for the CCP. Once the communists took power in 1949, they had to develop policies that were beneficial to the peasants in the countryside not only because of their ideological beliefs, but also because that is where most of their support came from (Meisner 1999, 20-30; Murphey 1980, 29-30). Thus, policies that promoted balanced growth in the cities and the countryside were implemented during the Maoist years. Additionally, even people from

the cities were brought to the countryside to be “re-educated” by the revolutionary peasants. Because cities in the “Old China,” before the 1949 communist revolution, were “administrative centers” (Murphey 1954) they were seen as parasitic to production, and a hotbed for counterrevolutionary bourgeois thought (Meisner 1999, 20-30). The countryside played the decisive and determinant role in the Chinese revolution:

To rely on the peasants, build rural base areas, and use the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities—such was the way to victory in the Chinese revolution... The imperialists usually begin by seizing the big cities and the main lines of communication, but they are unable to bring the vast countryside under their control... The countryside and the countryside alone can provide the revolutionary bases from which the revolutionaries can go forward to final victory... The contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of encirclement of the cities by the rural areas (Lin Biao quoted in Murphey 1980, 30-31).

Laurence Ma led the first systematic tour of American geographers in 1977 after the political opening up in 1972 (Pannell and Ma 1983). This led to a number of books on the modernization of China (see Ma and Hanton 1981; Murphey 1980; Pannell and Ma 1983), just as Leeming (1980, 218) began to complain that: “Western study of Chinese geography is in a low-key, low-profile and generally low-productivity state, and has usually been so.” These key studies opened China up to the discipline of geography, in the sense that geographers began to understand the revolutionary and Maoist logics of the revolutionary period. Geographic studies in the early 1980s, immediately after the ‘opening up’, tended to focus on the developmental methods of modernization projects region by region, and tended to focus on where, geographically, particular industries, mineral supplies, transportation networks, trade patterns, agriculture, population, etc., were located (e.g., Chang 1981; CK Lueng and Ginsburg 1980; Ma and Hanton 1981; Pannell and Ma 1983). Thus, most of these studies were idiographic in nature

and any logic within urbanization, development, and modernization were seen as peculiar and unique to the PRC itself because of its history, geography, and ruling ideology.

These first studies on the modernization of China in the early 1980s showcased China's anti-urban developmental policies and the revolutionary geographies that were created in the countryside during the Maoist era. In addition, these studies focused on the current and future direction of Chinese urbanism and economic development. However, these studies were done *after the fact* i.e., they were historical in the sense that the revolutionary Maoist line was already overthrown within the CCP by the "capitalist roaders"⁵ headed by Deng Xiaoping. The political economy and geography of China during this time was changing dramatically and at an expeditious pace. As we will see, though these early studies portrayed the Maoist economic and social development as praise worthy, discussion of the *global and class factors* that created the conditions for such a radical shift in China's political economy after the deaths of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1976 are difficult to find in geographic studies during the early 1980s.

In *The Fading of the Maoist Vision: City and Country in China's Development* (1980), Rhoads Murphey writes of China's past and present anti-urbanism. He states that since 1949 China "has been following a long established traditional path, radically different from the Western or modern urban-industrial model, not so much because of Communism as because of Chineseness" (Murphey 1980, 24-25). Murphey argues that the Maoist vision to lessen the gap between the countryside and the city is not because of any socialist and communist desire to do so, but because of China's anti-urban past. Murphey quotes a 17th century imperial official's scorn for the "evil in the city" (Murphey 1980, 24). Presently, Murphey states, there is a "hard choice to be made between revolutionary goals for national-rural development for all on the one

⁵ I put the Maoist "capitalist roaders" in quotations even though I accept the term. However, though I accept the term it does not mean in anyway that I am arguing that since 1978, China has been "capitalist." More on this matter will be found in chapter four.

hand, and rapid economic-industrial growth on the other...Economic-industrial growth can clearly take place most rapidly and most cheaply through continued urban concentration” (Murphey 1980, 40). For Murphey it is an either/or choice between economically developing a country in an egalitarian fashion and developing urban centers. Additionally, Murphey points out that “[s]patial concentration is a basic part of the nature of modern economic development...The problem then becomes one of how to distribute the benefits of development to the rest of the country” (Murphey 1980, 38).

Quite the contrary, Mao Zedong did not ignore the necessity of industrial clusters and urbanism to develop an underdeveloped, peasant social formation; he attempted to develop both the urban areas and the countryside. Mao wanted to develop and industrialize China in an egalitarian fashion, with “politics in command” in all economic initiatives (Gray 1974), to benefit the majority of the Chinese population i.e., the peasant classes (see Mao 1956 in Schram 1974, 61-83), and to rid of the exploitative division between the countryside and city. Murphey also does not take in account that *distribution is determined by production*. Whatever the dominant mode of production (feudal, capitalist, socialist, etc.) within the PRC, the mode of production creates the conditions for how value is distributed across the country. Between the two different methods of development exists a class struggle. This historical two-line struggle within the Party, personified by Mao on the one side and by Liu Shaoqi, and later Deng Xiaoping, will be explored in a later chapter, but the point here is to bring out that Murphey, and other geographers first studying the PRC in the 1980s do not take this class struggle within the Party into account.

However, Murphey (1980, 150) is keen to point out that just because China has begun to abandon most of their rural programs of industrial development after 1976 for “economic efficiency” it:

does not mean that Chinese cities will soon or even ultimately become like those in the West or Japan. The Maoist vision has made a deep and lasting impact on China. Even as revolutionary ardor cools, as Mao and the early revolutionary struggles recede into history, the legacy of his vision will continue to shape Chinese development policy and action in a way which seems certain to keep it distinctive, including the role of its cities and their structure and nature.

In addition, he argues that “[t]he conflict between revolutionary vision and urgent cost-economics will continue for a long time in China, however the balance between them may shift from time to time” (Murphey 1980, 36). Thus, though China is transforming its developmental methods and seemed to be moving towards Western models of development, the Chinese urban and developmental experience was, and would remain unique due to the continued dominance of the Chinese Communist Party in China’s state apparatus.

After 30 years of economic and social development in the PRC, Pannell and Ma (1983, 314) state that: “An evaluation of the performance of the economy indicates a satisfactory record of economic growth; nevertheless problems remain.” Pannell and Ma (1983, 317-230) conclude their book with a section on “New Solutions and Continuing Problems.” Here they provide us with what they think are the problems and the solutions for China in the post-reform period. These problems include providing employment for the increased urban population, agriculture and “the physical condition of the country” (again the problem of China’s geography) in feeding its people, transportation, and industrial growth. By giving us what they view as the problems and solutions, they provide us a view of the type of problematic that exists within China

geography during this time. What is seen as a problem and solution is produced within particular ways of knowing and modes of knowledge production. For Pannell and Ma, the obstacles of development in post-reform China had a lot to do with the geography of China, where there are mountainous regions, spatial isolation and poor environmental conditions. To solve some of these problems they state that the “excesses” of the Cultural Revolution and Gang of Four era in the late 1960s and early 1970s were being replaced with “more practical policies that stress individual incentives and rewards” (Pannell and Ma, 317). The decentralization of decision-making within the Chinese economy is seen as a way to be more efficient in agricultural production. More efficient regional specialization of certain agricultural products will replace the central planning of the Maoist era, where “grains were planted everywhere in China regardless of local conditions” (Pannell and Ma 1983, 317).

Ma and Pannell showcase other efforts to more efficiently modernize, to solve the problems of underdevelopment, and of improving the living standards for the Chinese people through “encouraging foreign capital and technology to come into China in order to make use of Chinese labor” (Pannell and Ma 1983, 317). Other similar narratives during this period mimic the natural transformation from the centrally planned economy, which was seen as inefficient and archaic, with decentralization and opening markets by scholars (e.g., Kirkby 1985; Ma and Cui 1987). Pannell and Ma (1983, 318) also, on the other hand, praise China’s geography as a source of “enormous potential for economic growth,” but if one looks closely, Pannell and Ma do not mean that China’s geography benefits Chinese development – it in fact impedes it – but China’s geography has the potential to be economically beneficial for global capital. As China opens up economically it provides a huge space for global capital to invest and to create new areas and avenues for continued capitalist accumulation. 50 years later, similar geographical

formulations from Cressey's time are problematically still coming up in geographic studies done on China in the early 1980s.

One can thus see that the solutions to the perceived problems of modernization were already in the minds of the China geographers even before the problems themselves were proposed. Solutions to underdevelopment were displayed in a way that naturalized capitalist reforms, and portrayed them as inevitable. Geographic studies on China in the 1980s did not at least display the arguments made by Marxist-Leninist and Maoist perspectives and understandings of the change from Maoist methods of development to Dengist methods, which are fundamental ideologies within China itself. If these geographers engaged with Maoist perspectives, they would possibly come up with *different problems and solutions*. This lack of engagement with some of the dominant ideologies in China has created and perpetuated an epistemological gap in human and economic geographic study on China. This epistemological gap, as we will see, still influences and affects China geography. These first studies on China after the "opening up" helped shape the future of China geography. Because they were historical and completed after the Maoist era, they had to rely upon discourses that tended to be critical to Leninism and Maoism. It is this foundation and epistemological gap within geographic study on the PRC that we must always keep in mind when analyzing how geographers have studied China through time and how their studies have developed to present time.

b. Questions on spatial outcomes from the reforms and "opening up"

The economic reforms that Deng Xiaoping and the capitalist roaders implemented changed the political economic landscape of China drastically. Geographers in the West began to examine these political economic changes, and in particular the spatial and political outcomes of the economic reforms. During the 1980s and 1990s human and economic geographers studying

China tended to focus on the changing industrial geographies in China resulting from creating “windows to the west” (Wang and Bradbury 1986) through Special Economic Zones (SEZs), regional inequality and uneven development that have resulted from the gradual, but not transitional, capitalist reforms (e.g., Fan 1995; Han and Pannell 1999; Lin 1999; Wei 1999), and changes in urban structures in post-reform China (Bjorklund 1986; Dwyer 1986; Hsu 1985; Ma 2002; Ma and Cui 1987; Shen 1995). Most of the work on the changes of urban structures focused on the differences between the Mao and post-Mao period are “mere descriptions” of the changes (Ma 2002, 1548), and tend to be highly critical of the way urban areas were organized and dealt with in the Mao period (see Dwyer 1986, 480).

By the 1990’s one could see that during the early reform period different regions were receiving more investment for development than the regions that typically received capital investment historically under the Maoist period. During the Maoist period, state investment tended to be directed to the interior regions of China, which were historically underdeveloped compared to the coastal port cities. After the economic reforms the focus of investment went back to the coastal cities in the 1990s, where it made more “economic and practical sense” (Fan 1995). As Western theorists in general began to apply Western theories, like neo-classical economic theories to explain and justify uneven regional development in post-reform China they began to see that one could not just apply theories made in the West, formulated from Western experience, and apply it to political economic conditions in China (Fan 1995). Fan (1995, 427) argues that: “The state and its preferential policies – and not, [according to neoclassical economics], comparative advantage – are the dominant driving forces of factor mobility and hence of selective economic growth in some provinces and cities and not in others” (Fan 1995, 427). Neo-classical theory is not a sufficient theory to understand and account for the regional

economic dynamics because “neoclassical theories...downplay or ignore the effects of the state” (Fan 1995, 444). The state, even since the reforms, has played a major role in economic development in China. Consequently, Western geographers stayed away from neo-classical theories of understanding the dynamics of uneven development and regional inequality within China, but did not replace it with another theoretical framework for the rest of the 1990s. Lin (2002, 823) pointed out that:

Most of the studies have tended to measure regional inequality in a quantifiable and objective manner. Relatively little has been done to explain why the unevenness of the economic landscape of China had changed in the way it was and what implications the Chinese experience may have for the theoretical debates about such concepts as flexibility, institutional thickness, rescaling or reconfiguration of state power, and neoliberalism in the studies of the transformation of major regional economies in the world.

Wei (1999) for example, went through the debates of the time on regional inequality within post-reform China and saw that depending on what method one uses i.e., what scale one employs to examine inequality, one would get different results if post-reform China became more regionally unequal or not after the reforms. In his review, he also noticed that most research produced on regional inequality within China was “empirically oriented” and needed to engage with more theoretical work in mainstream geography (Wei 1999, 55).

As we can see, the “unique” Chinese experience of post-reform China (Lin 2002, 1820), led many scholars in the 1980s and 1990s to see that it was problematic to uncritically to apply theories developed from Western experience and empirical examples (e.g., S.D. Chang 1981; Fan 1995; Wei 1999). However, during this time very few theories were developed that were able to abstract above the local and regional scale to understand the *logics* that were structurally shaping political-economic conditions in the PRC.

By the early 2000s key economic and human geographers who studied China began to see that there was a need to engage with the larger theoretical debates within economic and human geography (Ma 2002). Any early attempts to show that post-reform China was similar to economic transformations in Eastern Europe (e.g., Smith and Swain 1998), in the sense that China is “transitioning” to a capitalist social formation, was challenged by China geographers such as Ma (2002). Ma (2002, 1549) points out that:

the declared goal of the PRC’s economic reforms is: socialism to ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ – a rather amorphous goal generally understood as incorporating market forces within the limits set by the state. To date, China’s top leaders have never entertained the idea that neoliberalism and [bourgeois] democracy be included in the development of some form of socialist market economy.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s Ma (2002, 1551) began to see that China geographers were beginning to approach post-reform China from particular political economic theoretical perspectives, “although such perspectives are merely applications of existing Western theories and approaches.” For example, Wu (1997; 1999) brought in theories such as the “rent gap” (Smith 1979), capital switching, and other political economic approaches to understand post-reform urban China. However, since these political economic approaches were developed to understand social formations that are dominated by a capitalist mode of production, there were natural limits in transferring these theories to geographic areas that are not dominated by the capitalist mode of production. Ma (2002, 1551) argued that, to escape the limitations of these Western theories and approaches to post-reform China, “fresh perspectives based on China’s experience are needed to catch the essence of China’s reform efforts that are absent in other transitional economies, presenting them as concepts when theorization is premature or impossible and modifying the concepts periodically as new events unfold.” Even Wu (1997,

661), who incorporates the “rent-gap” theory to understand the built environment in post-reform urban China, states that: “In China, urban redevelopment projects...have not yet created the social problems that have accompanied inner-city rehabilitation in the United States.” The social relations that exist in the PRC are different than the social relations that exist in the United States and other capitalist social formations. Thus, Ma remains skeptical of employing broad-based theories to explain phenomena in all transitional economies and large countries.

Based on the geographic literature that covered the first 20 years of post-reform we see that there was a back and forth tension between geographers trying to understand China by employing broad based theories that were created in from experiences from Western countries and geographers emphasizing the particularities that exist in China that contradict or problematize some of these broad-based theories. Post-reform China is definitely a complex, and unique, political economy. As we will see, since the early 2000s geographers have begun to engage more fully with theoretical frameworks to understand the political economy of post-reform China. Even with new theorization that reflects the realities of post-reform China, there will be economic or political realities within China that will contradict a given theory; there is no way to get beyond this fact. Nonetheless, to make sense of the complex world, theorizing and abstracting are a necessary evil in order to understand the world and to change it, as Marx would say similarly in his 11th thesis on Feuerbach.

III. Economic/Human Geography on China: mid-2000s to present

“China’s economic power, its rate of growth, and its forms of economic organization are now factors with which all countries must contend—and which, therefore, they seek to understand. The growth of and forms of development in China carry lessons for much of economic geography” (Webber 2010, 584).

A year after Lin (2002) wrote about the changing discourses within China geography through time, and the need to begin to seriously engage with wider mainstream geographic debates, Yueng and Lin (2003, 120, emphasis in original) wrote a key and important article that argued:

It is now incumbent on economic geographers who are interested in Asia to move from area studies to engage more actively with mainstream theoretical (re)constructions and interrogations. In this sense, there is a need for two intellectual movements. First, we must avoid uncritical applications of “Western” theories in mainstream economic geography as if these theories were universally true...Second, we must turn away from doing what may be termed “Asian economic geography” because such a parochial approach to economic geographies of Asia will provide few significant theoretical insights that may be useful in other geographic contexts. Rather, we must endeavor to develop *new* theories, grounded in Asia, that might better inform our understanding of the “economic” in economic geography at large.

Despite this statement, geographers have incorporated a number of different Western theoretical frameworks to understand China and its relation to global capital. The theoretical frameworks deployed to understand the political economy of post-reform China from the mid-2000s to the present include: 1) critiquing China through what I call the neoliberalism framework (Harvey 2005; Lim 2014; Wu 2010); 2) critiquing China through theories of primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession, with a particular focus on the dispossession and development of land in the countryside (Harvey 2003; Lin 2009; Webber 2008); 3) critiquing and situating China through the Varieties of Capitalism(s) literature (Lim 2014; Peck and Zhang 2013); and 4) an increased focus on the presence of Chinese economic firms in other countries (Lim 2010; Pannell 2008; Yueng and Liu 2008). In this section we unpack some of these theories, especially

Harvey's (2003, 2005), to help us create a new theoretical basis of understanding post-reform China.

a. The Neoliberalism Framework

China's entrance into the WTO in 2001 created the conditions for a new discourse and problematic within China geography to arise. With China increasingly integrated in the global capitalist system, one can now view the dynamic changes occurring within the political economy of China in almost real-time through WTO databases that display different economic statics of China. In David Harvey's (2005, 144) book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, he argues that: "In so far as neoliberalism requires a large, easily exploited, and relatively powerless labour force, then China certainly qualifies as a neoliberal economy, albeit 'with Chinese characteristics.'" Harvey explains and understands the dynamic transformations in the Chinese political economy as a form of neoliberalism that looks similar to the West. Harvey (2005, 2-3) provides a succinct definition of neoliberalism:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state... must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets.

Harvey (2005, 3) continues, stating that "[a]lmost all states... embraced, sometimes voluntarily and in other instances in response to coercive pressures, some version of neoliberal theory," and that "even contemporary China... appears to be headed in this direction." Additionally, Harvey (2005, 34) argues that China is an outcome of a "particular kind of neo-liberalism interdigitated

with authoritarian centralized control,” or is in the midst of going through “neoliberalization with Chinese characteristics.” The “restoration of class power” through accumulation by dispossession is part of the process of neoliberalization (Harvey 2005, 79), and has, according to Harvey, occurred in China despite the fact that the almost 90 million-strong CCP is still in control of the Chinese state apparatuses.

There have been a number of responses within geography to this classification of China as “neoliberal” and as going through a “neoliberalization” process, most accepting this theoretical classification but adding some clarifications (e.g., Lim 2014; Webber 2008), while others question the theoretical classification of China being “neoliberal” (e.g., Wu 2010). Outside geography, there are different theoretical conceptions of China, but these will be explored in the next chapter.

Harvey and others (Webber 2008) argue that a form of primitive accumulation or “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003) is taking place in post-reform China, and that the word “primitive” in Marx’s notion of primitive accumulation is not so “primitive” as it is occurring in the here and now in China. Peasants are stripped from their means of production and means of subsistence in the countryside, and forced to go to the city centers for work, and contribute to the rapid urbanization that has been occurring in China since the capitalist reforms. Webber (2008), for example, argues that economic and social development *in itself* within China leads to peasants losing their land and means of subsistence. For example, not only is capital from the urban areas in China usurping rural lands, but also environmental protection laws that call for land preservation are banning certain rural groups in China from using that land for their livelihood and reproduction. In addition, as the tourist industry gains traction in the beautiful

Chinese countryside, the increased presence of outsiders on rural lands usurps even more land from people living in the countryside in various ways (Webber 2008).

Harvey himself does not give any concrete examples of peasants moving to the city centers because of accumulation by dispossession. This has led to some to question if China can be considered “neoliberal.” There are those like Arrighi (2007) who argues in his book *Adam Smith in Beijing: lineages of the twenty-first century* that we should keep our distance away from Harvey’s conception of China as neoliberal, because of the role of the CCP in the economy, and the fact that the rapid transformations within China post-Mao have been based on agricultural reforms that have been “relatively egalitarian” (Arrighi 2007). The agricultural reforms have been led by distribution of land that is quite different from the images portrayed in his final section of *Capital* Volume I. Throughout the reform process land has been redistributed, thus enabling farmers not to lose control of their means of production and to be involved in other non-agricultural rural activities (see Amin 2013; Arrighi 2007). Additionally, some show that migration from the countryside to the cities in China is drastically different and more organized in contrast with experiences from places like Brazil and India because of the continued state and collective ownership of the land in China (e.g., Amin 2013; Lim 2014). For example, in China there are not the kinds of slums that exist in Brazil and India. Harvey (2003) differentiates primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession, by saying they are interrelated but distinct. Accumulation by dispossession and primitive accumulation are an *aspect* of neoliberalism, but I argue that just because one or both occur in a given social formation it does mean that the social formation is “neoliberal” as such. According to Marx (1887/1967, 702-724) primitive accumulation is the historical violent process in the changes in the class relations of production and the separation of people (mostly people from the countryside) from their means

of subsistence. However, Harvey describes “accumulation by dispossession”, on the other hand “in a more general sense to include the erosion of such common property rights as state pensions, paid vacations, and access to education and healthcare” (Webber 2008, 401).

Lin (2009) complicates Harvey’s (2003, 2005) conceptions of “accumulation by dispossession” in relation to China through his critique of neoliberal formulations on post-reform China. These formulations, according to Lin, do not take account of the “fundamental social and political conditions” that create the conditions for the kind of land development that is pursued in China. Lin (2009: 10) states that:

In a country with an established tradition to use land as a basic source of subsistence, concern over food and social security, not just for some but for everyone in the society, has taken a position preceding over many others including utility maximization, market order, and exclusiveness of individual access to land to warrant its long-term efficient use. This is further compounded by a transitional socialist political economy in which the Party-state sets the parameters for the operation of market forces.

Thus the continued existence and involvement of the CCP in all economic and social affairs, and the long revolutionary history of the Chinese masses, problematizes much of the conceptions of what neoliberalism and neoliberalization look like in post-reform China.

Five years after Harvey declared China as “neoliberal”, Wu (2010) set out to examine to what degree China can be considered “neoliberal.” Wu (2010, 621) argues “market re-orientation in China is a societal modernization project and is consistent with the CCP’s effort to modernize China more than a half century ago, albeit in a dramatically different way.” The decision to install capitalist reforms after Mao’s death does not mean that China is neoliberal; rather, it should be seen as a political and economic rationale deployed by the CCP to maintain and consolidate its monopoly on state power, and to create a “economic development first” approach

to development, rather than the egalitarian approaches to development under the Mao-era. However, Wu reproduces conceptions of the PRC as “neoliberal” when he concludes his article by stating that if we take the perspective and understanding that “the changes occurring under market transition [is] a process of ‘neoliberalization’... [we can see], [f]rom this perspective, the functioning of neoliberalism is largely concealed beneath the edifice of China’s specific conditions” (Wu 2010, 629). Thus for Wu (2010), post-reform China is in period of “transition,” which implies there is a final end state, where the capitalist market eventually takes over completely as the dominant force in China’s political economy. However, there are others within economic geography who critique the notion of China as in “transition.” (Webber 2010). In addition, the full restoration of capitalism is not the stated goal of “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” (Lim 2014).

Harvey (2005, 34) even acknowledges that just because the economic reforms in China beginning in 1978 “coincided” with the neoliberal turn in the west, it is still “very hard to consider it as anything other than a conjectural accident of world-historical significance.” The goal since 1949 for the CCP has always been the same: to modernize and develop the productive forces in order to materially support a socialist social formation. The CCP are now just developing economically in a different way. Wu (2010, 624) states: “China’s market-oriented reform has its own political-economic, historical, and social origins... [it has] its own logic and [does] not necessarily result from the spread of Western neoliberalism.” China’s current mode of economic development was chosen by the CCP strategically for political and economic reasons.

Lim (2014) accepts Harvey’s definition of neoliberalism, but complicates it and advances it in relation to China by showcasing how there is dialectical relationship between “neoliberalization” and “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Lim argues that there is a

“fusion of socialistic policies with neoliberal logics” occurring in China, and they take particular geographic forms in China in a variegated and uneven way. Additionally, Lim states that it is “clear...that the days of a centrally planned economy are not over in China. The major difference from the Mao era is how this central planning is reconfigured through the dialectical differentiation of Chinese state spatiality *and* the variegated adaptation of neoliberal logics across different scales” (Lim 2014, 242, emphasis in original). Post-reform China relies upon uneven development for continued development just like other capitalist countries, and it has created political and economic problems for the CCP (e.g., Friedman and Lee 2010).

There is much attention put on David Harvey in this section even though he is not a “China geographer” because he is someone many people and activists outside of academia read to gain knowledge about particular matters. If he is classifying the PRC as “neoliberal”, then it naturally affects the degree of zeal that activists will have to defend China against Western political and economic interference. How we relate and understand certain countries theoretically affects the way we view them politically. Understanding and interpreting post-reform China as “neoliberal”, or in a process of “neoliberalization” is problematic both theoretically and politically. If one views the PRC as “neoliberal” then an individual, who defines himself or herself as progressive or anti-capitalist, will most likely be less keen to defend the PRC against imperialism and Western intervention. This is not saying that we should not be critical of the CCP and the current developmental path they are deploying, but we need to keep in mind the consequences of how we conceptualize China in the age of global capitalism i.e., imperialism.

The opening up of China provided capital with a vast space to perform a “spatial fix” (Harvey 1982). Capital was able to unload surplus capital to temporarily solve the crisis of overaccumulation that plagued Western countries in the 1970s. China provides global capital

with huge new consumer and labor markets that can be easily exploited through low pay and a disciplined workforce. The way David Harvey conceptualizes China as “neoliberal” and as a “spatial fix” for global capital disregards the economic and social developments made during the Maoist era that created the material foundation for the capitalist reforms to take off at such a pace that it did. Harvey helped create a particular geographic discourse that shaped the conversation on China around ideas on neoliberalism and the “spatial fix.” Conceptualizing China in this fashion in relation to global capital can create the possibility of future studies brushing off of the achievements that were made under Mao Zedong in future theoretical formulations of China.

b. The Varieties of Capitalism(s) (VoC) Framework

The Variety of Capitalism literature began to emerge in the social sciences in general in the 1990s and was picked up by economic/human geographers to provide a theoretical formulation that could critically respond to the “Marxist Turn” that dominated economic geography for 15 to 20 years (Peck and Theodore 2007; Yueng 2007). The Variety of Capitalism perspectives sought to explore the nature and diversity of global capitalism(s) (Berger and Dore 1996; Hall and Soskice 2001; Lane and Myant 2007). In the varieties of capitalism literature, we see that it attempted to destabilize “the conventional notion of Anglo-American capitalism that is often taken for granted as the ‘default’ form of global capitalism.” Rather, it is a global mosaic of different varieties of capitalism that exist (Yueng 2007, 342).

In Peck’s and Zhang’s (2013) important article, they bring the VoC framework in to understand post-reform China. They argue “the improbable combination of socialism and capitalism in China is simultaneously contradictory and complementary” (Peck and Zhang 2013, 370). For these authors, the VoC framework can be loosely deployed to understand the heterodox

nature of the Chinese post-reform economy. However, there are many “enduring residues” of China’s socialist formation, thus attempting to “add China to the existing catalogue of VoC cases is insufficient” (Peck and Zhang, 388). Despite this the authors, in the end, remain loyal to the VoC theoretical framework because China “displays little functional coherence, either as a socialist-developmental or as a neoliberal state and neither does it display a tidy transition between the two. Instead China *combines* contradictory forms” (Peck and Zhang 2013, 380, emphasis in original).

The general formulations that come out of this literature on China within geography is that the political economy of post-reform China “combines contradictory forms” of socialism and capitalism (Peck and Zhang 2013; Zhang and Peck 2014). However, does this formulation tell us anything new? Many “actually existing” social formations “combine contradictory forms” of socialism and capitalism to develop economically and socially. Peck and Zhang’s formulation of post-reform China fails to really explain and understand the global power relations that exist between imperialism and countries trying to finally arise within the system of global capitalism. For instance, Peck and Zhang (2013, 380, my emphasis) succinctly point out that:

China’s market transition was never technocratically prescribed from the center, according to some fixed developmental blueprint and *neither was it unilaterally imposed from outside, Washington-consensus style*, but instead progressed, in Deng’s memorable phrase, by ‘feeling the stones’, seems also to have proved to be fortuitous in the longer run—at least for economic growth. Crucially, it has meant that endogenous state capacities and centralized party control have been maintained through China’s developmental transformation. *In contrast with other post-socialist states, China has not had to contend with systemic institutional failure; it has preserved formidable powers in the ‘steering’ and sequencing the reform process...* In this socialist market economy, the state’s hand is nearly always visible...sometimes ‘guiding’ and sometimes ‘grabbing.’

Peck and Zhang (2013, 357) place post-reform China within the Varieties of Capitalism(s) framework, which “seeks to account for enduring spatial variations in national economic performances...between liberal market economies, modeled on USA, and coordinated market economies, modeled on Germany.” However, given the above statement, it seems that the authors should have rather focused on the agents that make it possible for China to not bow down to the “Washington-consensus” and why China has been able to preserve the “formidable powers” that steer and sequence the reform process. Rather than put China into the VoC(s) framework it would be more beneficial to look more closely at the global power dynamics between global capital and countries trying to finally rise within global capitalism like China. To do this requires more close engagement with the Chinese Communist Party and a new theoretical framework that exists on the global scale (i.e., the global class war, which will be explicated in chapter four).

On the other hand, the Varieties of Capitalism(s) framework helps one see that there are “many varieties of capitalism; China’s variety is just one of the many and is clearly not a clean break from China’s pre-reform economic model and the model’s approach to industrialization” (Liew 2005, 366). The state still plays a major role in allocating resources and capital to certain regions, and cannot be looked upon as just another “neoliberal” society. Without essentializing China and without ignoring the commonalities with other market economies, “China’s geography gives the PRC strong international bargaining power and has produced powerful sub-national governments in China, which together with the PRC’s earlier embrace of central planning and continued quest for national unity are producing a form of market liberalism that is situated between the plan and IMF/World Bank neo-liberal models” (Liew 2005, 366). Scholars who employ the Varieties of Capitalism(s) (VoC) framework point out that not only are there

differences in capitalisms between countries, but also within countries themselves. Within China itself there are different “models” for growth and accumulation in different regions and cities; most notably the Guangdong “liberal” model vs. the “statist” Chongqing model (Lim 2014; Mulvad 2015). However, because the CCP directs much of surplus capital investment and still centrally plans, notions such as the state’s necessary “union” with capital as a key feature of a social formation dominated by a capitalist mode of production (Harvey 1982) is problematized with the case of PRC and the continued dominance of the CCP. While capital as a thing, class and process dominates over Western capitalist countries, the Chinese state dominates it. For example, the Chinese state apparatus determines how much exploitation of labor by capital occurs in China by setting the political and geographical parameters of where capital can function (e.g., the Special Economic Zones). Additionally, the existence of the power of the CCP challenges and pushes back against economic geographers who attempt to situate China within the Varieties of Capitalism(s) theoretical framework (e.g., Lim 2010, 2014; Zhang and Peck 2014). Fitting post-reform China into the Varieties of Capitalism(s) framework poses problems and barriers in the attempt to understanding post-reform China’s position in global space and its relationship with global capitalism.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter has explored what geography has been keen on studying in China through time and the limitations of the dominant paradigms deployed to understand the People’s Republic of China. Though many geographers have begun to take the advice from Lin (2002), Yueng and Lin (2003), and Yueng (2007) that there is a need for geographers that are specialists in China and other East Asian economies to scale up theoretically in regards to China, it seems like Cressey (1934), *in a sense*, is still correct when he says that we know little about China. This

problem has existed for a long time. It is not that there is a lack of great empirical studies, but there is a lack of theoretical depth and accuracy. Viewing China's political economy as just another version of capitalism or neoliberalism really explains nothing about the global forces (i.e., imperialism) that the PRC was forced to deal with when it opened up to the global capitalist world to develop its productive forces in order to sustain a socialist social formation.⁶ Thus, it is necessary to bring in a truly new framework in understanding the historical and contemporary geographical political economy of China (see chapter four).

In a similar vein as Harvey's (1973/2009, 144-145) call for more broad theorizing in geographic studies, Yueng (2007: 346) states in his editorial on remaking economic geography: "[w]e need to get out of the mindset of self-chastised reluctance to engage with big theory and large questions. We need to remake a kind of economic geography that takes a globalizing perspective without fear. Theorizing back...is but the beginning of this not-so-modest enterprise of globalizing economic geography." Though geography and other social sciences have gone through a period of "post-al theory" (see Zavarzadeh and Morton 1994), the global political situation forces us to formulate grand claims, and these grand claims I will argue in chapter four must be situated within the global class war. The conditions are ripe for the global class war theoretical framework to come to the social sciences, and it is already beginning (e.g., Malott and Ford 2015). However, before introducing and deploying the new global theoretical framework to understand the PRC – and in order to strengthen our argument/position – we need to explore the major perspectives and formulations existing in the social sciences and humanities on post-reform China that go beyond geography's narrow confines.

⁶ In Chapter 4 imperialism will be theorized in more depth.

Chapter Three: A Cuckoo Crying in the Midnight

“Truth emerges from facts colliding with theories, and from theories colliding with each other”
–Bruce Cummings

I. Introduction

Within the social sciences and humanities in general there are seemingly endless studies on the political and economic dynamics of post-reform China, with far ranging perspectives and frameworks of understanding and critiquing the reform period. Thus, when one attempts to display the major interpretations of post-reform China one must abstract away from a range of studies. The dominant (neo)liberal interpretations of post-reform China coming from Western governmental and academic institutions connected with policy will largely be left out in this chapter for two important reasons. First, it is the dominant framework in the United States both on an academic and popular level of critiquing China that it has “not gone far enough” in installing capitalist reforms in its reform. Examples of this perspective can be seen on an almost daily basis within the pages of the likes of the *The New York Times* and *The Economist*. Second, within the “critical” and “radical” factions of the social sciences itself there are such wide varieties of interpretations of China that it provides more than enough material to showcase the different ways scholars have studied and interpreted the political economy of China. For example, there are strong critiques of the social and economic consequences from “reform and opening up” from Western Maoists themselves (e.g., Hinton 1990), the Chinese “New Left” (e.g., Wang 2003, 2005, 2016), and from Marxists (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett 2005; Harvey 2005; Petras 2006). There are Eastern European economists who study economies in post-communist social formations and analyze China from Eastern European economic theoretical traditions (Kornai 2008b; Szelenyi 2010). There are others that uphold and defend the “Chinese Model” of economic development and provide nuanced perspectives on the political economy of

post-Mao China that explain the Dengist theory of Marxism and of development (e.g., Tian 2005). There are even critical appraisals of the Chinese political economic system (e.g., Amin 2013; Lin 2006, 2013). The variety and range of different perspectives that do not come from dominant Western neoliberal positions thus warrants a focus solely on more “critical” and “radical” perspectives.

This chapter seeks to explicate the major interpretations/frameworks within the “critical” social sciences and humanities in general. I will do this by critically reviewing the major perspectives and theoretical frameworks social scientists have deployed to understand post-reform China. I will divide the major perspectives not temporally as in the previous chapter, but within their particular theoretical framework from which they function. It may seem problematic to place studies together that exist years apart from each other because of the constantly changing political economic realities. However, this chapter seeks to simply showcase the different perspectives and theoretical frameworks that have been deployed to understand the “reform and opening up” process that has been occurring in China since 1978 within the critical social sciences. This is important because depending on one’s particular theoretical perspective one comes to different classifications and conclusions as to what kind of social formation exists in post-Mao PRC. In addition, there is importance in showcasing the different conceptions of post-reform China that come from “critical” scholars because these studies influence the way “progressives” on the popular level view China politically.

In this chapter I argue that, while studies within the social sciences in general obviously incorporate a wider range of perspectives and frameworks compared to the narrow confines of geography, studies within the social sciences of post-reform China do not, as Mao (1937/1966) would say, treat the international situation as the primary contradiction. Said in another way, this

chapter argues that critical and radical scholars do not take account of the global class forces that help determine what occurs within the People's Republic of China. This is not to say that the conditions and the class struggles that exist at the national scale are not important, but they are secondary and, I argue, should always be analyzed in relation to global forces, especially in the age of imperialism and globalization. Though some scholars engage with global forces in relation to post-reform China – particularly the contradiction between the global North and global South (see Amin 2013; Arrighi 2007) and how global capitalism shapes and permeates within China (Lin 2013) – these conceptions are not revolutionary in the sense that they treat the global capitalist system as staying in place for a long period of time and thus must be engaged with by the global South in order to develop their productive forces. In addition, these studies tend to ignore the “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism” and the United States’ drive to create a unipolar world order (Ford 2017). I will do this by first showcasing Marxist and Maoist formulations of post-reform China and their keenness for focusing on the development of capitalism in China. Then, I will display the way the “New Left” – represented largely by Wang Hui’s (2003, 2005, 2016) work – within China interprets China’s historical and contemporary political economic conditions. After, I will showcase those who uphold and defend the “Chinese Model” of economic development and those who are critical of it and problematize that there is even a “Chinese Model” (Heilmann and Perry 2011). These studies will be followed by an explication of the arguments made by Eastern European economists who study economies “in transition” from the “classical model” of socialist central planning to market-based economies. Finally, I will engage with those who have broadly come from the tradition of world systems theory to understand China’s rise within the exploitative global capitalist system (Amin 2013; Arrighi 2007).

II. Marxist and Maoist Formulations of “Reform and Opening Up”

Marxist analyses of China tend to put emphasis on the logics of global capital, and how China has been incorporated within the global capitalist system, and focus on the development of capitalism in China. However, as we will see, Marxist scholars tend to downplay the agency the Chinese Communist Party has in facilitating and managing forms of accumulation that do not necessarily follow the dictates of global capital (Chu and So 2010, 47). Focusing on the economic base of the reforms is of utmost importance because the mode of production determines what occurs in the superstructure *during non-revolutionary times*. However, solely focusing on the economics can leave out how the international political forces, though existing in the superstructure, play a pivotal role in determining the degree to which a country that is trying to finally rise within the global economic system is willing to be exploited and dominated. Engaging with global capital to develop a given country’s productive forces inevitably means dealing with oppression from imperialist states, imperialist institutions (e.g., NATO, the IMF, the World Bank, WTO, etc.), and transnational corporations. However, because of the existence of the nationalistic Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese state apparatus, the CCP can limit the degree of dominance of global capital and reconfigure the relations of production in the interests of the Chinese people. Nonetheless, Marxist frameworks have helped us see the logics of global capital as they work their way into the PRC after the reform and opening up.

Hart-Landsberg and Burkett (2005, 16, 34 my emphasis) argue that “China’s market reforms have led...to *full-fledged* capitalist restoration, including growing foreign economic domination.” Further, they argue that the reforms have produced a “brutal form of capitalism.” Although they acknowledge that the CCP decided internally to install the market into a socialist economy for rational economic and political reasons, over time “market imperatives proved

uncontrollable. Each stage in the reform process generated new tensions and contradictions that were resolved only through a further expansion of market power, leading to the growing consolidation of a capitalist political economy” (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett 2005, 40). For them, China’s official insistence that it practices “market socialism” or “Socialism with Chinese characterizes” does insult to the very definition of what socialism is and hurts the socialist movement in Western capitalist countries because it gives socialism a bad name due to the exploitative relations that have ensued since the inception of the Dengist conception of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” and “Four Modernizations.”⁷ Despite the original goals of the reform to develop China’s productive forces to create the material foundations for a developed socialist society through a “socialist market,” China’s market economy now “has little to do with socialism.” These authors do not go as far to say that China’s capitalism is neoliberal as Harvey (2005), Wang (2003) and others do because they recognize heavy state involvement in macroeconomic planning. However, Hart-Landsberg and Burket state that China’s rise through its alternative developmental model should not be seen as an example of the “end of history” where neoliberal global capitalism reins supreme. Rather they argue that China can be used as a window or avenue to reinterpret the struggle between socialism and capitalism at the global scale (e.g., Bowles and Dong 1994; Roemer 1993, 1994). The “Chinese model” of economic development should not be looked upon as a positive alternative to global neoliberalism because it not only negatively affects Chinese workers and peasants, but also because “the economic transformation of China...[is also] far from positive for working people and economic security

⁷ “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” is the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) official ideology since reform and opening up in 1978. It is claimed that “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” is socialism adapted to the Chinese conditions of overall underdevelopment. It is based upon “scientific” understandings of socialism and Marxism, where the productive forces have to be developed through any means to create the material foundation for a developed and prosperous socialist society. The “Four Modernizations” also began to be stressed after 1978 by the CCP, where the “Four Modernizations – modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology – is a great and profound revolution” (Xi 2014, 448).

and stability in the United States. They have contributed to the destruction of U.S. manufacturing production and jobs, the decline in U.S. living and working conditions, and greater economic imbalance and instability in the United States and world economy” (Hart-Landsberg and Burket 2005, 110). Thus, the celebration by progressives of the Chinese economic model of development has real negative political consequences for the international working class because the Chinese model of economic development itself contributes to the further functioning of the global capitalist system and all the social ills that are produced from it.

The authors say they are “far from bashing China.” Rather, their aim is to demonstrate “that China’s *growth strategy* generates regional and global as well as national contradictions” because “[e]xport-led growth pushes down regional wage rates, undermines domestic consumption, and generates destructive regional competition for foreign investment and export production” (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett 2005, 113, emphasis in original). As a contrast to China, the authors point to Cuba’s resilience in maintaining its socialist system in the face of the economic crisis that ensued from the result of the collapse of the USSR, and the dawning of an era of a unipolar neoliberal global capitalist order (not to mention its geographic proximity to the biggest and strongest imperialist country). Almost overnight after the fall of the USSR, Cuba lost 80% of its total trade in both imports and exports, and its GDP dropped by 34%. The market reforms that the Chinese Communist Party installed which propelled the Chinese economy in an unprecedented fashion became an attractive option for Cuba to jumpstart its economy. Fidel Castro even made a trip to China and Vietnam in 1995 to study their market reforms to see if they could be applicable to Cuba (Castaneda and Montalvan 1995). Rather than install “market socialism” as China did in 1978, Cuba instead allowed small services like taxis and barbershops to be run by private individuals, because Fidel Castro and the socialists in Cuba could not accept

the negative consequences of the reform in China on its socialist society. The large-scale market reforms have allowed the market and capitalist social relations to reenter the Chinese social formation at the expense of socialist social relations (see Meisner 1996; Weil 1996). Of course there are certain political factions and economists within Cuba who look to China with praise because they were able to incorporate “into global networks,” which they see as “essential for development today” in the age of unipolar neoliberal global capitalism (Monreal 2001); but they remain in the minority. However, with the death of Fidel Castro this could change. One thing is for certain: large-scale market reforms in Cuba will most certainly look different and have different economic and political consequences than that of China due to Cuba’s geographic size, and proximity to the heart of imperialism.

James Petras (2006, 423) continues the Marxian fixation on the development of capitalism in the PRC, focusing on the national and global actors within the development of capitalism in post-reform China and states that “[t]he most dynamic sector of growth is the private sector, but within that sector foreign capital is growing the fastest, especially in strategic export sectors and increasingly in finance and the domestic market”. Petras argues that eventually through the continued development of capitalism in the PRC and the further infiltration of foreign capital, China will become a neo-colony to global capital. He argues that the PRC has been losing its national sovereignty slowly overtime since the initial reforms. If transnational corporations can get ahold of key industries like the telecommunication industry, foreign capital will be able to influence the affairs within China a great deal. However, what Petras (2006) and other Marxists fail to consider in their studies of the changing political economy of China is the political half of a political economic analysis. The state and the Party (the Chinese Communist Party) still play key and fundamental roles in shaping the political

economy of China through macroeconomic planning and mediating the new class forces that have developed since 1978 (So 2005). Since the speech made by former General Secretary Jiang Zemin in 2001 that called for the CCP to recruit more “politically progressive” people from the private sector, capitalists have begun to enter the CCP. Jiang argued that the politically progressive capitalists and employees of foreign firms can “make contributions to developing socialism’s productive forces and its other endeavors through honest labor and work;” thus they should be allowed a chance to join the Party. So (2005, 485-486) characterizes the contemporary class relations in post-1978 China as a “class-divided society embedded in a strong Leninist party-state, thus social classes and class conflict are mediated through the state and shaped by the state” (So 2005, 485-486). The Chinese state is able to deal with the new rising class contradictions that have been produced from the capitalist reforms through the incorporation of different class forces/interests into the Party however contradictory and non-revolutionary they may be.

Thus, So (2005) argues that with any analysis of contemporary China, one must always have the Chinese state be at the center of the analysis alongside the analysis of the economic base. However, rather than incorporating the state back into analysis as So (2005) calls for in critiquing Marxist analyses that pay little attention to the state in relation to the economic base, we should put the Party back into the center of the analysis, and the class struggle that occurs *within the Party*. Though the CCP has control of the Chinese state apparatus, the Party and the state are not the same entity. There are functionaries and state officials that are not in the CCP. If the Party has the ability to change the mode of production from socialism to “full-fledged capitalist restoration” just because of the death of a revolutionary leader, as Marxists in the West argue (e.g., Hart-Landsberg and Burkett 2005), then the Party must be engaged with in any

theoretical understanding of contemporary China. Not having the CCP at the center of analysis leads to faulty formulations that see China as fully capitalist or “neoliberal” rather than consisting of a force that resists neoliberalism (Ford 2017).⁸

Hinton (1990) and a wide array of former Maoists originally from the United States and the West in general are extremely critical of the reform period and have often taken the same line as the ruling class in United States in denouncing the contemporary Chinese Communist Party (McInerney 2012). These studies have put the class character of the CCP and the historical “two-line struggles” that occurred within it as a primary part of their analyses of the contemporary political economic situation in China (Hinton 1972).

For Hinton (1972, 16): “[o]ne can only come to ridiculous conclusions when one tries to analyze major political developments apart from class analysis, apart from the class struggle and the national struggle that goes on in the real world.” In one of his analyses of post-reform China Hinton (1990) focuses on the class struggle that is not limited to the one that occurs in the realm of production, but the ideological class struggle that occurs *within* the CCP itself. Since the CCP took power in 1949 there has always been a debate, or a “two-line struggle”, within the Party about how to develop China’s productive forces in order to create the material foundations for a socialist social formation to function. Marx originally thought that workers’ revolutions would occur in the most developed capitalist countries first because these countries developed their productive forces to a degree where socialism could flourish i.e., where poverty and need could be abolished by changing how the social wealth is distributed. But the opposite happened with China, Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, Korea, etc., having socialist revolutions despite having so-called “backward” socioeconomic conditions. During the Mao period, in general, China was developing

⁸ How the Chinese Communist Party can be defined as what Ford (2017) calls “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism” will be explored in the next chapter.

its productive forces along a socialist and egalitarian basis with proletarian “politics in command”. However, after the death of Mao in 1976, Deng and his “capitalist roaders” changed China’s developmental path from an “ideological” plan to a more “pragmatic” approach.

The capitalist roader theory of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” consists of the introduction of the market and Western Keynesian economic theories for state management/control of the market. The function of socialism according to Deng is to “develop the productive forces, to avoid polarization, and to provide prosperity for all,” and the development of socialism “can only be built through the endeavors of...several dozens of generations” (Du 2005, 11). This theory of socialism drastically differs from Maoist theories of socialism and communism. It could be argued that this theory of socialism matches more closely with orthodox Marxist conceptions of history and socialism because of its argument that the historical role of capitalist markets is to develop the productive forces to a certain degree where it can create the material foundations for socialism to function.

The two different factions that have always existed within the CCP consist on the one hand of the revolutionary Maoists who want to take the socialist road of development, and on the other hand of whom Mao called the “capitalist roaders,” those like Deng Xiaoping who wanted to take the capitalist road to develop socialism. Hinton (1972, 41) maps this struggle as a “conflict between mutually antagonistic classes over two mutually exclusive roads to the future.” For Maoists like William Hinton the eventual takeover of the CCP by the “capitalist roaders” after the arrest of the Gang of Four *less than a month* after Mao Zedong’s death on October 6th 1976 – which included Mao’s wife Jiang Qing who famously shouted during her trial that “making revolution is no crime!” as she was being pulled away by guards (Saba 1981) – represents the reestablishment of the class power of the bourgeoisie in China and the restoration

of capitalism. Mao foresaw all of this and in 1966 he launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which was a:

[H]istorically unprecedented campaign to remove [the capitalist roaders within the Party] from power and prevent them from carrying out their line. In the end he failed. The important thing to remember at this point is that the Cultural Revolution was indeed a revolution, an enormous class struggle, a form of revolutionary war, if you will, to determine the future of China. It cannot be seen as simply the implementation of some policies by Mao—‘cryptic instructions’ while people bowed to his portrait in morning exercises (Hinton 1990, 157).

The Maoists line of economic and social development, which also saw rapid economic growth, was never the most popular line within the CCP (Hinton 1990). The Party, since its inception has been filled with “capitalist roaders.” However, because of the existence of Mao and his ability to bypass the Party bureaucracy and go directly to the people to organize mass political movements he was able to create a revolutionary political line in the CCP (Meisner 1999).

Hinton (1990, 187) argues that the contemporary Chinese Communist Party ruling group “are certainly not trying to build socialism – they’re *all* capitalist roaders. And they’ve developed beyond that to the point of being bureaucratic capitalists with strong comprador tendencies”. Further, he states that “if you examine the list of those people that [Deng Xiaoping] has been able to mobilize [to high posts in the Party], almost all of them was named by Mao Zedong as a capitalist roader. They are not a group of men who have stood for socialism.” Hinton sees “the development of bureaucratic capitalism” in contemporary China where government officials “are taking over huge chunks of industry and combining them as private fortunes and then making comprador deals with external capitalists” (Hinton 1990, 187). As of late, under Xi Jinping these activities have been cracked down upon, but as long as market forces exist corruption will continue to occur because the market creates the material foundation for such acts.

Hinton (1990, 189), paraphrasing and referencing Mao, states that Mao warned that if Deng, Liu Shaoqi and other capitalist roaders came to power then the CCP would “change color” and would end up as a “fascist regime.” However, at the same time Hinton says that it his estimate that “there are large numbers of dedicated communists in the Chinese Communist Party and also in the army. I foresee the possibility of change brought about by the mobilization of such people – perhaps through an army coup led by radical officers who can rally all the revolutionary elements in the army, in the party, and in society.” Despite that Hinton acknowledges the existence of different factions within the Party, to characterize the ruling group as “fascist” has catastrophic political consequences. In 1989 Hinton even went as far as supporting the Tiananmen student movement, which had clear counterrevolutionary characteristics. Cortes (2012, 73) argues that “[t]he political character of the Tiananmen demonstration was clearly aimed at the overthrow of the Communist Party of China.” Given the context of the global political environment of the time the overthrow of the CCP would mark a historic setback for the Chinese people because the “freedom” the students were struggling for is a euphemism for the “freedom for China to open its market to capitalism, and consequently the freedom of the capitalist world market to exploit Chinese workers” more than it already does in the reform period. For imperialism, “reform and opening up” are not enough. The imperialist class camp wants “unrestricted access to Chinese resources, markets and labor” (Cortes 2012, 77).

There were a myriad of demands made during the 1989 demonstrations in Beijing (some even progressive demands), but the *leadership's politics* were completely counterrevolutionary. Though there were some workers who participated in the demonstrations that were protesting corruption and unemployment, the role of the workers and the peasants, whom were historically the most revolutionary class in China, were mostly left out or stayed out of the movement. One

example of the kind of politics the students were perpetuating is Wang Dan, one of the leaders of the student movement. Wang Dan, quoted in *The New York Times*, stated in a classist fashion that: “The movement is not ready for worker participation because the principles of democracy must first be absorbed by students and intellectuals before they can be spread to others” (WuDunn 1989). Additionally, before the actual violence occurred between the student protesters and the PLA on June 4th, Chai Ling, the “commander-in-chief” of the Tiananmen demonstrations, told US reporter Philip Cunningham in her “last interview” that the student leadership’s goal was to provoke the Communist Party into attacking demonstrators. When this did not happen she said she was “so sad” because the leadership of the demonstrations was “actually hoping for bloodshed” because “only when the Square is awash in blood will the people of China open their eyes. Only then will they be really united.”

At the time, the relatively privileged college students in China had only consisted of 0.2 percent of the whole Chinese population of 1.1 billion, and “while there were many political trends within the student movement, there was a dominant leadership group (Cortes 2012). The goals of this group “had nothing to do with democracy for China’s vast majority of poor and working people” (Cortes 2012: 76). Some claimed that the students had “vague” demands (Hinton 1990), but US imperialism understood their demands clearly. There was great support of the demonstrations amongst the western capitalist countries. One of the major symbols of the demonstration, the so-called “Goddess of Democracy”, purposively resembled the Statue of Liberty. The movement clearly had its political roots in western notions of democracy, which is equivalent to capitalism.

If the Chinese Communist were to be replaced by another group or Party that is dedicated to building socialism and communism once again and got rid of the “capitalist roaders” that of

course would be a welcome development, but we must put any political goal in context. In the current international and national political situation no such development seems likely for the foreseeable future, thus for progressives in the West it is imperative that we defend what is left of socialism in China, like nationalized landed property, which gives peasants in countryside guaranteed allotments of land, and the “shell of a centrally planned economy” (McInerney 2012); and this means critically defending the Chinese Communist Party from attacks from the global North.⁹ The “shell of a centrally planned economy” provides the institutional frameworks to return to socialist central planning if the Party changes its political character. In addition, recessions are a basic feature in social formations that are dominated by the capitalist mode of production. Capitalist countries in the global North experience an economic crisis every ten years or so. It should be noted that “the combined elements of state planning, the protection of national capital [by the CCP] and the continued existence of a state industrial sector have prevented China from experiencing a recession or depression – characterized by the destruction of productive capital or negative GDP growth – since 1978” (McInerney 2012, 29). Thus, the CCP plays an essential role in preventing economic crises that are prevalent in capitalist societies.

In this section we see that throughout the history of the CCP there have been a series of struggles within the Party. Presently, the dominant way of thinking within the Party is Dengist. Though we are not always privy to the internal struggles within the Party because of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism, there are sometimes hints at the internal debates that occur. There are clues that there are different ideas of where China should go in the future. For example, a public letter was published on July 12, 2007 by retired officials and others on the eve of the 17th Party Congress titled ‘Precarious is China’s socialism! The Chinese people have reached another extremely critical time’ (Ma et al. 2007). The letter reflects a left current within

⁹ The theoretical tools for one to do this will be explicated in the next chapter.

the CCP that is hardly ever heard of in the Western press. These Leftists within the Party point out that “Comrade Deng Xiaoping once said if reform and opening leads to polarization, it is obvious that we are digressing. Digression is nothing but a mistake and the road of capitalism”. In their letter they point to the social and environmental problems that have been produced by the reforms and state “the above social issues are only becoming more serious with development.” They close by referencing a famous poem written by Mao Zedong: “A cuckoo is crying in the mid-night until she throws up blood: she believes that her crying can bring the east wind back!” (Ma et al. 2007, 103, 111).

Hinton (1990, 164-174) displays a global perspective when he points out that the economies of South Korea, Taiwan, etc., were able to develop so rapidly through capitalist market methods i.e., by ingraining themselves within the capitalist international division of labor due of the existence of socialist China. When reformers such as Deng looked to these “Tiger” or “Dragon” economies as an example of the economic benefits of deploying the market, Hinton reminds the Chinese reformers of the global political economic conditions that allowed for such developments to be possible; it was not the market per se that helped develop South Korea or Taiwan but the desire of the imperialist countries to develop these economies. Western capitalist economic institutions invested heavily into these economies to develop them rapidly along capitalist lines to counter the communist threat (Hinton 1990). Socialist China forced the global North to allow – and to assist – other Asian countries to develop their productive forces to benefit their own people, though along capitalist lines. However, when it comes to contemporary post-reform China, Hinton does not deploy a global perspective when he critiques the Party for practicing “bureaucratic capitalism” and when he supports the students in 1989 rather than defending the Party from the counter-revolutionary movement. From a global perspective we see

how the CCP's nationalist orientation protects the vestiges of socialism leftover from the Maoist era, and protects the people of China from global economic crises that occur periodically within the global capitalist system. There are those in the global North (mostly neoliberals) who continue to complain about how closed off China continues to be despite the reform and opening up (e.g., Weisman 2007). Thus, I would add to Hinton's (1972, 16) original claim that on the importance of class analysis, that one cannot analyze major political developments apart from *global* class analysis.

III. Formulations of China's "New Left"

Above, we have already seen the existence of a Left resistance within the Party, but there are also "Leftist" forces *outside* the Party, or what people call the Chinese "New Left." There are "neo-Maoists" in China led by people like Zhang Hongliang and Sima Nan who are extremely critical of the reforms and the penetration of Western ideology into China (see Anderlini 2016 for a crude showing of the "neo-Maoists"). However, while acknowledging that the Party is controlled by those who no longer uphold Mao's original vision of how to build a communist society, they do not go as far as being fully against the Party and fighting for bourgeois freedoms like a multi-Party system; they remain steadfast in resisting US and Western imperialism.¹⁰

Then there are those on "the Left" who critique contemporary China from *outside* the Party – most notably Wang Hui¹¹ who, like Harvey (2005), Chu and So (2010), and others, deploy the framework of neoliberalism to analyze and critique contemporary China. This form of critique is prevalent within Chinese intellectual circles and within the Chinese "New Left" (Wang 2003, 2005). For Wang (2003, 44-45) neoliberalism is a "distinctive discursive"

¹⁰ Sima Nan in particular is unpopular amongst student-types, particular students of elite universities in China, and is portrayed in a negative light from news sources out of Hong Kong and Taiwan. There are a number of videos online from Taiwan and Hong Kong criticizing Sima Nan and videos of students confronting him during his speeches.

¹¹ I focus on Wang Hui in this section because he is a central figure among a group of academics known collectively as "the New Left" (Mishra 2006).

hegemonic force in China. And the “hegemonic status of Chinese neoliberalism took shape as part of the process by which the state used economic liberalization to overcome its crisis of legitimacy”. For the Chinese “New Left”, “[t]he twentieth century seems to have ended prematurely in 1989... The Beijing event and the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in that year marked the beginning of neo-liberalism guiding the global economy and the political structure” (Wang 2005, 61). Since the 1980s China has “pushed forward a process of market extremism” (Wang 2003, 43), and thus has become neoliberal itself according to Wang. In general, the “New Left” in China – and in the West – sees 20th century problematics as over and archaic, and thus argues we have to develop new formulations to understand and to change contemporary political economic conditions. For example, Wang (2003: 45) argues that in critiquing conditions in post-reform China:

the principle task of the progressive forces in contemporary China is to prevent these critiques from developing in a conservative direction (which would include attempts to move back to the old system), and also to push strongly to urge the transformation of these elements into a driving force seeking broader democracy and freedom in both China and the world.

Thus, for Wang, and “New Left” intellectuals within China, the goal should not be to just return to days of Maoism because traditional Maoist ideals do not match contemporary demands being made by “progressive forces” within China. The ideas that the “progressive forces” in China mobilize around are ideas of freedom, democracy, and “the concept of equality in daily life” (Wang 2005, 71). These ideas and demands were popular among activists and dissidents in former “actually-existing socialist countries” of the 20th century like the former USSR, the Eastern European socialist states and China. These demands helped fuel the massive protests in 1989.

Wang Hui in explicating the demands that the students were making in 1989 displays what I call the third way-ism that is prevalent in the contemporary Left in both academic and grass-root circles. While they may appear Left, in actuality they are on the Right because people like Wang Hui want to continue the reforms,¹² and have no faith in relying on the Party to carry out meaningful politics for the masses of people like it did in the 20th century (Wang 2016). The “crux of the issue”, for Wang (2005, 71), is “the type of reform” that will be carried out. Because of the “dual nature” of Chinese neoliberalism (it is both a “global and dominant ideology” in China) neoliberal interests are imbedded within the CCP and the reformist Chinese state on the one hand and imbedded within the student movement itself on the other hand with transnational capital and its mouthpieces supporting the student movement ideologically. Global capital has interests in both maintaining the existing system in China and creating a more “democratic” and “free” country. However, Wang (2005, 71) argues that though “the students, intellectuals, and other strata who participated in the movement all supported reform (including political and economic reform) and demanded democracy...their expectations and understanding of reform differed vastly with the reality of the relations among the interested parties.” Thus for Wang, we should not support the CCP or the neoliberals who supported the student movement for their own benefit like the Kanghua and Sitong corporations (and others) who had key stakes in the student movement. These corporations “tried to use the movement...to influence the internal power structure of the state” (Wang 2005, 70) rather than actually genuinely supporting the particular demands the students and intellectuals were making during the 1989 Tiananmen movement. However, the fight for more democracy and freedom in daily life in the abstract sense can be problematic. Often times the result of movements that have deployed these particular political

¹² Wang Hui has stated that: “Any criticism of contemporary China should not be directed at the remarkable achievements of the Chinese reforms” (Wang 2005: 82).

demands against former socialist states have ended up benefitting global capital because the movements ignored traditional socialist values of abolishing capitalist exploitation and oppression. “Democracy” and “freedom” in daily life became euphemisms for capitalism. In an interview with Roy Howard talking about bourgeois notions of “personal liberty,” Stalin says:

It is difficult for me to imagine what ‘personal liberty’ is enjoyed by an unemployed person, who goes about hungry, and cannot find employment. Real liberty can exist only where exploitation has been abolished, where there is no oppression of some by others, where there is no unemployment and poverty, where a man is not haunted by the fear of being tomorrow deprived of work, of home and of bread. Only in such a society is real, and not paper, personal and every other liberty possible (Stalin 1936/2008).

Thus we cannot just uncritically support popular demands for more “democracy” and “freedom” without examining the larger global class forces involved. In addition, Mo Yan, the 2012 Nobel Prize winner in literature, stated after he won the prize that censorship is a must and should be used on any false “defamation” and “rumours” against China (Associated Press 2012). Complete “democracy” within a country that is always under threat of imperialism can be problematic because it gives free reign of forces of imperialism to spread its ideas and counterrevolutionary activities. As long as imperialism exists, complete “freedom” in socialist and anti-imperialist countries is not possible because “the capitalist class never permits revolutionaries a moment’s rest in trying to extinguish the working class’s efforts to advance its rights” (Cortes 2012, 71).

The two global class forces in China are those of downright counterrevolution on the one side and a Communist Party that is *dominated* by capitalist roaders and nationalist interests on the other. One can choose not to support either side because of the faults contained within each but as we will see in the next chapter, the global class war will go on independently from individual human will, and one cannot just pick a political position outside it, though

intellectuals tend to do so, like Wang Hui's analysis of the 1989 movement and contemporary China. To paraphrase philosopher Slavoj Žižek, not taking a side is taking a side. Not taking the side in the global class war is taking the side of the stronger global class camp. Not recognizing the global and national class character of the 1989 movement and ignoring the imbedded Western interests in the Tiananmen movement and not defending the – though flawed and non-revolutionary – CCP, an agent that actually resists the global hegemony of US imperialism and neoliberalism, is typical of third-way contemporary intellectuals and Leftists.

Knowing the history of the People's Republic of China, we can understand why "New Left" intellectuals like Wang Hui do not want to return to the days of when the "revolutionary road to communism" was in existence (Lotta 1994), i.e., the type of socialism that existed in the PRC from 1949 to 1976. Though intellectuals are still looked at skeptically by the contemporary CCP at times, during the Maoist era intellectuals as a social group and class were seen as class enemies of the proletariat during particular times (Meisner 1999). Students that were apart of the Red Guards beat some teachers and professors during the Cultural Revolution (Esherick, Pickowicz, and Wilder 2006). Mao was always skeptical of intellectuals and their role in participating in class struggle. Mao (1967, 322) states that:

The intellectuals often tend to be subjective and individualistic, impractical in their thinking and irresolute in action until they have thrown themselves heart and soul into mass revolutionary struggles, or made up their minds to serve the interests of the masses and become one with them. Hence although the mass of revolutionary intellectuals in China can play a vanguard role or serve as a link with the masses, not all of them will remain revolutionaries to the end. Some will drop out of the revolutionary ranks at critical moments and become passive, while a few may even become enemies of the revolution. The intellectuals can overcome their shortcomings only in mass struggles over a long period (Mao 1939/1967, 322).

Though Maoist socialism may have benefited Chinese workers and peasants (the majority of the population) in particular ways, it is easy to see why a lot of intellectuals within China would not want to go back to the Maoist days. Intellectuals tend to keep their critique of the reforms within the confines of the lack of political reform, but also point to the achievements of the reform (Fewsmith 2008).

When it comes to critiquing China through the lens of neoliberalism there is great philosophical idealism in Wang's thought:

In the process of the [reform] and rapid development of the Chinese economy, income differences among each social stratum, group, and region became wider, and the poor population increased rapidly. This historical transformation caused the old state ideology to contradict state practices (the socialist ideology stressed equality), and the state ideology was not able to function. It is in this sense that 'neo-liberalism' had become a newly dominant ideology. Therefore, the traditional theories of socialism and capitalism cannot serve as tools for historical analysis. Only from the perspective of ideological transitions can we understand the following phenomenon: the rejection of the old ideology excluded the new ideological trend of social criticism [that developed in the 1980s in the period of intellectual liberalization] (Wang 2005, 75-76).

Here Wang treats neoliberal ideology as something that just floats in air and does not connect its origins within a particular economic base. One cannot just examine "ideological transitions" to understand contemporary China. Instead, we should ask how neoliberal ideology became dominant in the contemporary Chinese social formation (if it even is). Marx argues in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, "the economic structure of society [creates] the real foundation on which arises... definite forms of social consciousness" (Marx 1859/1999, 20). The rise of neoliberals – and neoliberal ideology – within and outside the CCP is a result of the capitalist reforms themselves, and thus should be critiqued on this basis.

In later work Wang (2016) leaves his focus on neoliberalism in China and focuses on the “statification” of the Party and the following “break down of representation” and “depoliticization” of the masses. Wang Hui emphasizes the need to create a “post-party politics” because the party politics of the 20th century will simply not work for contemporary conditions and problematics. One of Wang’s arguments in his most recent work is that “[i]n today’s conditions, with party politics closely bound up with structures of power, the possibility that political parties will transform themselves and formulate a new politics is extremely low” (Wang 2016, 169). The only reason Wang gives in arguing that the CCP will “most likely” not reform back to the times it represented the masses through mechanisms such as Mao’s mass-line policy itself is because of the “statification” of the Party and the fact that “the political logic of the twentieth century has receded” (Wang 2016, 163). Thus, we have to conceive of a “post-party politics” to bring about change.

Wang (2016, 155) argues that there are two forms of the “statification of the party” that have developed historically and have led to the “breakdown of representation.” In the past the Party previously “represented” the people during the days of the revolution and through Mao’s “mass-line” policy. But, for Wang two things have eroded this “representation”: “first, the bureaucratization of the Party in the early days before economic reform, which became one of the pivotal triggers for the launch of the Cultural Revolution; second, the marriage of the Party and capital in the process of the corporatization of government during market reform”. For Wang, these factors are a result from first the Party taking state power (i.e., the bureaucratization of the Party) and then from the economic reforms (i.e., the marriage of the Party and capital) which have created the material incentive for Party members to use capital for their own benefit. Given this situation the Party will have a hard time reforming itself and

“representation cannot be reconstructed simply by repeating old slogans or practices” (Wang 2016, 159). Thus, a new kind of politics – a “post-party” politics – has to be produced and perpetuated in the age of international neoliberalism. Post-party politics highlights how “political organizations can be open, unfinished and non-bureaucratic” (Wang 2016, 176). Wang Hui points to the legacy of the mass-line where communist leaders would go directly to the people and hear their opinions and bring it back to the Party to create the correct policies. The Maoist mass-line put faith in the people and differed drastically with how the Communist Party of the Soviet Union dealt with the masses. As Mao (1967, 119) put it:

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily “from the masses, to the masses.” This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

Mao bypassed the state and Party bureaucracy to go directly to the masses on a constant basis during his time to mobilize the people to create mass rallies to further the class struggle within socialism, most famously during the Cultural Revolution. It is assumed by Wang (2016) that all of this ended after Deng and his capitalist roaders implemented the 1978 reforms. However, Heilmann and Perry (2011) show that in contemporary China “Mao’s invisible hand” is still around (see also Arrighi 2007, 376 for an example of mass-line initiatives in post-reform China). There are still countless examples of non-bureaucratic forms of governance today in post reform China through what Heilmann and Perry (2011) call “guerilla policy style.” Guerrilla-style

policy-making “calls for circumventing existing rules, overcoming constraints, and maximizing one’s own maneuverability while minimizing or eliminating one’s opponents’ influence on the course of events” (Heilmann and Perry 2011, 15). Adapted elements of the guerilla policy that was prevalent during Mao’s time still “play a vital role in dealing with crucial policy tasks, from mobilization in times of perceived crisis to managing central-local interactions to facilitating economic policy innovation and reorganizing public health care”. The authors add that:

although ideologically inspired mass mobilization no longer plays the same central role in routine policy-making and administration these days, the ambitious propaganda effort to shape and manipulate public opinion has never ceased, even if...the goal has changed from mobilizing the masses for political action and personal sacrifice to promoting passive compliance and commercial consumerism (Heilmann and Perry 2011, 21).

This shows that it does not take a “post-party politics” to truly represent the people of China. With the continued existence of “guerrilla-style policy-making” there is a possibility that the CCP can again truly represent the masses of people in China within existing Party structures. Instead, the key aspect that has to change is the political and class character of the CCP.

Further, there was a political and economic logic for the Party to installing market reforms (Shirk 1993; Fewsmith 2008). The international situation was calling for the Party to change course of development. The CCP extensively studied the reform experiences of Yugoslavia, Eastern European countries and the USSR, and adopted a reform that took the successful things and left out the bad (Yu 2005). There can be a time in the future where it makes sense logically to go back to the days of central planning and rid the Party of the capitalist roaders. The “heritage of Mao Zedong and the specter of the Cultural Revolution have not disappeared in the collective memory of people in and outside the Party” and thus can be deployed once again when the political and economic situation calls for it (Tian 2005, 309). The

20th century is still not over, despite the contemporary Left's insistence on it. 20th century frameworks and relations still exist in the 21st century. It is only 2017 and the capitalist mode of production is still the dominant mode of production on the global scale. Imperialism, and resistance to it, still exists.

IV. Upholders of the “Chinese Model” and the Eastern European Economists

There are many scholars both within and outside of China who uphold – but not uncritically – the “Chinese model” of economic development and the market reforms that have been installed as a better and higher form of modernity than both classical liberal modernity and the traditional socialist model. For these scholars, the Chinese model is an “alternative modernity” (Tian 2005; Yu 2005) to both traditional models. China's 1978 reform “originated directly from the comprehensive negation of the Cultural Revolution” (Tian 2005, 293). It is within this context that we should understand the current form, or “model,” of development China is currently pursuing. As I have already stated, the theoretical and material justifications of the reform made by Deng and the other capitalist roader Party members and economists argue that the most “efficient” way to develop the productive forces to the degree where they can sustain a socialist social formation is through market mechanisms, and this does not mean re-installing capitalism. Du Runsheng, a pro-reformer within the CCP, who has been advocating economic reform since the 1970s, says that “[s]ocialism requires highly developed productive forces, surpassing what capitalism has” (Du 2005, 19). Thus, the method that develops the productive forces the quickest is the most “socialist” in the eyes of the supporters of the reform and the “Chinese model” of economic and social development. Deng Xiaoping asserted: “the conclusion that the planned economy has a socialist nature, and the market economy has a capitalist nature is incorrect” (Deng Xiaoping quoted in Yu 2005, 37). The way pro-reformers

describe the “Chinese model” is that the economic model “allows some segments of the population to become rich first, but its goal is prosperity for all. It relies on market forces, but also retains the power of the government to regulate the market (especially the labor market) and to implement macro-planning”. The “Chinese model” puts most emphasis on economic growth, but takes into account “population pressures, social stability and the welfare of the masses, and is willing to cut back on growth if necessary” (Tian 2005, 299).

Further theoretical justifications of the reform include claims that the reforms solved “the issue of the relation between production and superstructure, and the roles of advanced production relation and superstructure in promoting social development” (Yu 2005, 35). In other words, the reform enables the productive forces to develop because the superstructure and the social relations of production do not impede on its further development as they did during the Maoist era according to the reformers. The social relations of production, which advanced too quickly past what the economic base could support during the Maoist era, now correspond with the economic base and are no longer fetters upon the further development of the productive forces.

It must be emphasized here however that the Maoists knew the fundamental importance of developing the productive forces and heavy industry as well, despite what the reformers argue. The Maoists—rather than doing “whatever works” as the reformers argue for—put the class struggle first. The Maoists paid attention to what form the class character of economic development was going to take. Mao believed that the sheer will of the people, rather than capital-intensive investment, could overcome any barrier to economic development. During the Maoist era labor-intensive projects in both the countryside and urban areas were established to do two things: 1) to counter the push of a technical and professional class dominating the working class in production in regards to things like decision making within production, etc., and

thus to eradicate the exploitative divide between mental and manual labor; and 2) to lessen the divide between the cities and the countryside (Bettelheim 1974).

In *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China*, Charles Bettelheim (1974) goes into detail about the great accomplishments made in cutting back the division between mental and manual labor, and lessening the divide between cities and the countryside. He states that one of the legacy of imperialism is “[t]he concentration of huge populations in very large cities, such as Shanghai” (Bettelheim 1974, 88). Thus, in order to eradicate the vestiges of imperialism, economic development had to occur throughout China and not in just the relatively developed port cities. During the Mao era, and the Cultural Revolution in particular, rural industrialization played a major role in the economic policies. During rural industrialization there develops:

a new spatial distribution of the productive forces, which are ceasing to be clustered around increasingly large cities, as is the case in capitalist countries. In China industrialization is accompanied—undoubtedly for the first time in history—by a process of disurbanization, certainly in very large cities such as Shanghai, but also in some like Chenyang, where the movement from the cities to the countryside has involved hundreds of thousands of people” (Bettelheim 1974, 88).

All in all, the Maoist method was about putting “politics in command” of economic development, meaning putting the politics of the people (the workers and peasants) in front of the politics of the “capitalist roaders” within the Party. Mao wanted “the non-expert to lead the expert” (Gao 2008, 113), and for the working class to dictate how production occurs rather than bureaucratic Party members who were ingrained with bourgeois ideology and separated physically and ideologically from the people. There were impressive economic successes during

the Mao era. Between 1952 and 1976, industrial output increased annually by 11.2 percent, and agricultural production had a twofold increase in the same period (Kim 2012).

Returning to the defenders of the “Chinese model,” Deng has built “an alternative modernity that is different from liberalism as well as from traditional socialism”, and both (neo) liberals and “traditional socialists” are “suspicious and critical of the Chinese model Deng Xiaoping advocated” (Tian 2005, 298) The challenge, as the reformers admit, will be how to integrate forms of consciousness that arises from aspects of the market and from former socialist social relations because the values of individualism from the market and collectivism from the era of socialism are often contradictory.

The theoretical formulations developed by the pro-reformers may seem more orthodox Marxist if one reads Marx teleologically, that societies have to go through certain historical epochs, or stages, before they can arrive at communism. It is quite common to hear criticism of Marx that he has a teleological view of history, where societies go from feudalism to capitalism to socialism and then finally communism. However, this is a great mischaracterization of Marx’s method of historical materialism in analyzing contemporary and historical social formations, and totally abstracts away from the class struggle, which is a central tenant in Marx’s theory of history. People tend to have this criticism of Marx because in *The German Ideology*, Marx argues that society needs to develop the productive forces enough to sustain a socialist political economic system. Without the development of the productive forces to the degree where want is no longer in existence, a revolution that attempts to install communism will just make want/need a general condition (Marx 1846/1970, 56). However, Maurice Meisner (1999, 126) points out that: “In his preface to the 1882 Russian edition of *Capital*, Marx held out the possibility that the precapitalist village commune might serve as a ‘starting point’ for socialist development—but

only if a revolution in Russia served as the ‘signal’ for proletarian revolutions in Western European countries”. Mao often argued that it was easier to spark revolutions in relatively “underdeveloped” countries because the masses are not ingrained with bourgeois ideology and are “blank slates” (Schram 1974).

The upholders of the “Chinese model” defend their position with relatively strong, though problematic, theoretical foundations. However one thing they fail to take in account is how the Chinese reforms and opening up have contributed to the continued domination of the capitalist mode of production on a global scale. Before 1978, global capital and the Keynesian regime of accumulation were going through a major crisis. The opening up of the PRC provided global capital, as Harvey (1982) would say, a vast space for capital to spatially fix itself. This allowed capital to geographically spread its internal contradictions and to temporarily prevent overaccumulation. Though the reformers can point to the enormous benefits that China has received from opening up in the form of new technologies, increasing the standard of living, and developing the overall economy, the reformers tend to over glorify these successes and downplay the negative side of installing market-based reforms like increased exploitation of labor and the environment. In addition, and most importantly, they fail to see the global implications of China’s reform efforts by just focusing on developments inside China. Because China’s reform helped global capital temporarily solve its internal contradictions it has strengthened the power of the global bourgeoisie, at least for the time being. Since China has opened up the global proletariat have lost some of the benefits they won through struggle earlier in the 20th century.

As we have seen above with the case with Cuba, every country that has experienced a socialist revolution in the 20th century has deployed the capitalist market to deal with economic crises. Lenin installed the New Economic Policy (NEP) to deal with the horrible economic and

social conditions that were created from imperialist intervention in the Civil War (1918-1922). Most of the Russian proletariat was wiped out and industry and agricultural output were well below pre-war levels (Trotsky 1937, 24). Lenin knew that the proletarian state had to act or the capitalists would take hold of the opportunity to fully restore capitalism. Private enterprises were allowed to develop in the countryside and state controlled and monitored foreign capital was allowed to enter. However the NEP, which was abolished in 1928 by Stalin, was called by its right name by Lenin. It was a “necessary move”, but a “retreat from socialism” (Lenin 1973). The NEP was never glorified and was classified properly by Lenin as a necessary retreat from socialism to save the newly established proletarian state and socialism. The example of the NEP in the former Soviet Union is extremely different than the case with post-reform China. The market reforms in China and ”Socialism with Chinese characteristics” are glorified by the Party and written into law in China.

Lin Chun (2013) problematizes the way the “Chinese model” is conceptualized and theorized by pro-reformer types. Lin (2013, 82-84) emphasizes that it is “very tricky to speak of China’s rise or a Chinese model ahistorically, without recognizing important historical links...such a model has been historically prepared for, and preconditioned by, China’s twentieth-century revolutionary transformations. In other words, the model is premised on a collective appreciation of the historicity and fundamental justice of the Chinese communist revolution”. Thus, one cannot talk about the “Chinese model” without connecting it to its historical, revolutionary, and socialist foundations. Instead Lin Chun (2013, 93-107) makes us think of the “Chinese model” as containing four revolutionary features that are rooted in its revolutionary traditions: The “Chinese model” features (1) “not a powerful state but a socialist state. Without a socialist commitment the model collapses”; (2) a “strong and resourceful public

sector. A strong public sector has allowed China to develop relatively independently and ‘internally coherent’; (3) a strong emphasis on the “priority of popular wellbeing...in development”. That China has been able to “feed nearly one-fifth of the earth’s population and continued to seek improvement in their living conditions is nothing less than world-historical”; (4) the fourth and final aspect of the “Chinese model” is part of and ingrained in each of three previous features of the what the Chinese model really is. It is about “social organization, participation, and power.” The Maoist response to the problems of bureaucracy that were experienced in the Soviet Union and never solved was essentially “anti-statist” (Lin 2013). Mao initiated decentralization well before the reformers did during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. However, these decentralized policies were socialist and revolutionary in nature, unlike the decentralization that occurred after 1978, which was capitalist in nature. As already explored, the “mass-line” is an example of anti-statism and mass participation. Daily life in the “Chinese model” is organized through the work unit system in both the urban and rural areas where there is within each unit “a structure of central planning and full employment” (Lin 2013, 105). The Chinese model is thus founded on particular form of democracy that goes beyond the narrow confines of voting for representation that occurs in the capitalist west. Democracy in China “is then a matter of returning socialism to the social and recapturing the state from within. It is not about fighting a socialist dictatorship to win a capitalist democracy but about mobilizing the resources to overcome its contradictions and achieve its own democratization” (Lin 2013, 107-108). Ford (2016a, 6) questions the dominant discourse of democracy that surrounds Western critiques of China, “[d]emocracy necessitates inclusion and participation and fails to name the exclusions and divisions that makes politics possible. Democracy names a commons; communism names a commons *against*” (Ford 2016a, 6).

However, I would argue this is precisely the type of participation (i.e., “democracy”) that Mao advocates for. The Maoist Communist Party *is* civil society in the Gramscian sense, and this is why the Party must be explored in theoretical detail in future chapters.

The Eastern European economists that have studied reform in their post-communist countries argue that the “classical system” of socialism had an “inherent contradiction” and had the “tendency to produce chronic shortages”, and thus limited “the potential economic dynamism of the socialist economy” (Kornai 1980; Szelenyi 2010, 200). Kornai (2008a, 22) states, “the classical system is transitory. It proves relatively short lived compared with the socioeconomic formations that managed to have survived for centuries”. For these economists the socialist system that existed in the 20th century plays its role right after revolutions, but to truly become an efficient and developed economy it must use the market and eventually transition away from the socialist system all together.

Szelenyi (2010) introduces the origins of the idea of a “socialist market economy” that was originally proposed by Polish economist Oscar Lange. Lange argued that a socialist economy could become more efficient if market mechanisms were introduced alongside leaving the public ownership of the means of production intact. Lange’s ideas influenced economists in the Soviet Union and in China, particularly Yefang Su, who’s ideas were picked up later by Deng Xioping, but were firmly rejected by Mao Zedong (Kueh 2008, 10-22).

However, Kornai (2008b) argues that “market socialism” as described by Lange is unfeasible because “central planning tends to go together with public ownership, while markets tend to assume private property” (Szelenyi 2010, 203). Kornai sees reforming the “classical system” as a “package deal”, meaning that if one wants to install market reforms “one has to accept private ownership” (Szelenyi 2010, 203). Thus, for Kornai China’s self-declared “market

socialism” or “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” is a mischaracterization of what its political economy is in reality:

China...cannot be seen as [the historical realization] of Oscar Lange’s theoretical construct of ‘market socialism’...He put great intellectual effort into proving the market can fulfill its coordination role in the *absence* of private ownership. In the real world of China...the market has become the chief coordinator...[T]he ownership structure has undergone fundamental changes, in which the state-owned sector has given up its leading role. ...The result is far from a classical socialist system, and fairly close to a typical capitalist system” (Kornai 2008b, 58).

Szelenyi (2010, 208) concludes, “[f]or the distant observer” the contemporary CCP “more closely resembles the Kuomintang of 1950 than the CCP of 1968,” and that post-reform China is a part of the “varieties of postcommunist capitalisms...[that] drift from one form or type to another in various generations of reform or transition.”

However, the degree of private property relations and the production of surplus-value through it, and of market relations in China, is extremely uneven and differs among provincial governments. In some areas there is more liberalization and in others more state control and public ownership (Chu and So 2010; Lin 2013; Wu 2010).

Lin (2013, 94-95) points out that: “According to the PRC constitution, amended in the 1990s to accommodate market transition, public ownership, including ‘ownership of the whole people’ and ‘collective ownership of the laboring masses,’ must still dominate China’s mixed economy (article 6)”. This aspect of the PRC constitution is a key part for how the CCP justifies its contemporary political economic system as being socialist, even if in reality the domination of public property relations is being undermined. However, others point to this article in the constitution and to other aspects of China’s post-reform political economy to showcase how it could still be deemed “socialist” (see for example Hsueh 2011; Panitch and Gindin 2012;

Pearson 2007). Even Szelenyi (2009, 203), who declares contemporary China to be a form of “post-communist capitalism,” gives important reasons “why the arguments that China is a socialist formation should be considered seriously.”

V. The World Systems Approach

In general scholars who are rooted in the world systems approach developed by Wallerstein and Andre Gunder Frank have conceptualized the “emergence of China” and China’s rise to the global economic stage as a showing of the “ongoing shift of the epicenter of the global political economy from North America to East Asia” (Arrighi 2007; Amin 2005, 2013). Arrighi (2007) and Amin (2013) display the global power relations involved between the global North and global South in China’s struggle to develop within the global capitalist system.

Despite stating that the reason that China is able to become an “emerging power” precisely because it has not chosen “the capitalist path of development,” Samir Amin (2013), almost contradictorily, classifies contemporary China as “state capitalism.” The classification of China as “state capitalist” differs from other conceptions of China as “neoliberal” (Harvey 2005; Wang 2005), or even “state neoliberalism” (Chu and So 2010). Amin argues that just because China’s reform happened to coincide with the rise of global neoliberal regime of capitalist accumulation, it does not mean it is neoliberal; the reforms are instead for Amin a part of the “long route” to socialism that has been ongoing in China since 1950. Similarly, in his work on post-reform China Arrighi (2007, 353) seeks to dispose of the “myth that the Chinese ascent can be attributed to an alleged adherence to the neo-liberal creed.” Amin and Arrighi always have the global in mind in their analysis of post-reform in China and thus come to different conclusions than those who deem post-reform China as “neoliberal” because of what is occurring *within* China, without taking in account global power relations.

Amin (2013) declares the opening up to foreign capital as “necessary in order to avoid the stagnation that was fatal to the USSR.” Though Amin and Arrighi acknowledge that China’s economic successes that ensued after the reforms were “built on the extraordinary social achievements of the Mao era” (Arrighi 2007, 370), China and other socialist states have to reform their economies after the countries create the initial economic foundations through socialist central planning that allows the socialist countries to compete with the global North. Once this foundation is created by socialist central planning the system tends to stagnate in the face of world imperialism, thus “CCP had little choice but to play the game of world politics by the extant capitalist rules.” When the United States began to warm up to the PRC after its defeat in the Vietnam War it “made perfect sense for Communist China [to engage economically with the United States]...to boost its national wealth and power” (Arrighi 2007, 372). Further, Arrighi (2007, 373) describes the practical rationales for reform:

[A]s long as China was cut off from global trade by US Cold War policies and felt threatened militarily by the USSR, the CCP was driven to use ideology as the main weapon in the struggle to consolidate its power nationally and internationally. But when, in the latter years of the Cultural Revolution, the ideological weapon began to backfire, at about the same time that the United States sought an alliance with China in the Cold War with the USSR, the stage was set for a pragmatic use of the market.

After the reform “China did not fall into the trap of ‘shock therapy’ [like the experience of Russia], whose destructive effects on the social, political, and economic fabric are now obvious”. (Amin 2005, 134). This Dengist method of economic reform would not have been an option if it were not for the continued existence of the CCP occupying the Chinese state apparatus because global capital and its financial institutions do not usually allow for such things, and because the bourgeoisie within China have not yet been able to take back complete control and fully restore

neo-colonial conditions. The revolutionary tradition in China endows “China’s subaltern strata with a self-confidence and combativeness with few parallels elsewhere in the global South” (Arrighi 2007, 376). Because of the existence of the CCP China continues to have a “truly sovereign productive system” (Amin 2013). It is within this context that we should understand the global struggles China is facing today. As China’s “sovereign project” continues to succeed and grow the stronger the pressure from US imperialism and its “subaltern European and Japanese allies” will be on the PRC (Amin 2013).

Thus, one should defend the Chinese Communist Party against imperialist attacks (both theoretical and “real” attacks) despite the flaws of the contemporary CCP. The partnerships with foreign enterprises created and maintained by the CCP have enabled China to absorb new technologies and master their development. Partnerships of this kind do not exist anywhere else in the global South (Amin 2013). China’s banking system remains “completely national” and remains focused on its internal credit market, and the “yuan is not subject to the vagaries of the flexible exchanges that financial globalization imposes” (Amin 2013); in addition, large basic industries that were established during the Maoist era have largely not yet been denationalized. China’s welfare policies are also moving in an opposite direction than other capitalist countries in the global North and South:

At the very moment when the social-democratic conquests of social security are being eroded in the opulent West, poor China is implementing the expansion of social security in three dimensions—health, housing, and pensions. China’s popular housing policy, vilified by the China bashing of the European right and left, would be envied, not only in India or Brazil, but equally in the distressed areas of Paris, London, or Chicago!” (Amin 2013).

Samir Amin and Giovanni Arrighi treat the global as the primary scale of analysis of contemporary China. However, one key weakness in their theoretical formulations is that it is

non-revolutionary and all too often abstracts away from the social and economic negative consequences of China's reform process. Amin and Arrighi develop their theoretical formulations of China on the basis that global capitalism is here to stay for the long-term future. Thus, for these scholars countries like China that are trying to develop their productive forces *must* open up and engage with global capital and allow it to exploit their people and the environment, to a certain degree. This leads to exploitative and oppressive conditions for people living in these developing countries. These conditions are not taken seriously enough in Amin's and Arrighi's global scale and historical analysis of the political economy of contemporary China.

VI. Conclusion

Obviously this chapter could not cover all the perspectives on post-reform China within the social sciences and humanities. However, what it has done is examine the major interpretations that exist in the critical social sciences and the perspectives from the pro-reformers themselves, and has provided us with a foundation on which we can develop a new understanding of post-reform China. We have seen how Marxist formulations of post-reform China have tended to put emphasis on analyzing the logics of capital (Harvey 2005), how China has been incorporated within the global capitalist system (Petras 2006), and tend to focus on the development of capitalism in China (Hart- Landsberg and Burkett 2005). However, these scholars downplay the agency the Chinese Communist Party has in facilitating and managing capitalist accumulation that does not necessarily follow the dictates of global capital (see Chu and So 2010: 47). We have also seen how Maoists in the West have been extremely critical of the reforms and thus fall onto the side of the global capitalist class in "China bashing" (see Hinton 1990, 175-191).

In this chapter we have also explored how the “New Left” within China formulate how to engage in a new form of political struggle – what Wang (2016) calls “post-party politics” – that can deal with new 21st century problematics, as the 20th century “prematurely ended” in 1989 due to the fall of the Soviet bloc and the Tiananmen event (Wang 2003, 2005). Additionally, we have explored how Chinese economists and philosophers have theoretically defended the reformist “Chinese model” of economic and social development (see Tian 2005), and critiques of how reformers formulate the “Chinese model” itself of how they ignore the historical revolutionary roots of the “Chinese model” (Lin 2013). We also saw how the Eastern European economist like Jonas Kornai (2008b) have theorized “postcommunist capitalisms” and the particular way China has reformed and developed capitalism. Finally, we have seen how scholars coming from the tradition of world systems theory deploy a global and historical analysis of China’s rise, but because their analysis remains on the global scale it leads to non-revolutionary theoretical formulations that all countries in the global South trying to develop their productive forces have to engage with the global capitalist system. However, we have seen in history that a country can in fact develop its productive forces without in fact engaging with the exploitative global capitalist system (e.g., the rapid industrialization that occurred under Stalin in the former USSR).

While all these studies and interpretations of post-reform China provide interesting and important insights on the logics of China’s political economic reform, they still collectively lack theoretical understanding of China’s place within global power relations between the two global class forces. In the age of imperialism and global/transnational capitalism we need to bring the class struggle to the global scale. The above studies do not emphasize enough the primacy of the international situation, and the contradiction between the imperialist global class camp and the

proletarian global class camp. One needs to analyze contemporary China as an example of “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism” and global capitalism (Ford 2017). More specifically and correctly, one needs to analyze the historical and present-day Chinese Communist Party as an agent that resists neoliberalism and imperialism. And though Amin (2013) and Arrighi (2007) focus on the global, they do not come up with theoretical formulations that can help lead to the overthrow of the global capitalist system and do not touch down on the class struggle that occurs *within* China.¹³ It is now due time to analyze and understand contemporary China from a new and truly revolutionary theoretical perspective, the global class war theoretical framework.

¹³ Though as we will see the class struggle that occurs within China must always be related back to the global class war.

Chapter Four: The Stubbornness of the 20th Century

“It is man’s social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world” –Mao Zedong

I. Introduction

Now that we have gone through the necessary steps of exploring and exposing the limitations of the different interpretations of post-reform China from the academic discipline of geography and from the broader social sciences and humanities we can bring a theoretical framework that has largely existed outside Marxist academic circles, with very few exceptions, namely the global class war (Ford 2017; Malott 2016; Malott and Ford 2015). This chapter argues that the best way for progressives, and more specifically Marxists, to interpret – *and critique* – post-reform China is through the lens of the global class war. I will do this by first displaying how other scholars have theorized global capitalism and the development of a “transnational capitalist class” (Robinson 2004), and show their limitations. After that, I will present the theoretical tools of the global class war to understand post-reform China, and give a brief political genealogy of how the global class war theoretical framework developed and came about through real-life historical political struggles within the revolutionary communist movement itself. Then, I will explicate how we should contemporarily understand imperialism. Finally, I will situate contemporary China within the global class war itself. This chapter will create the theoretical foundation for the next chapter where we will explore the history of the Chinese Communist Party through the theory of the global class war. This chapter focuses on the theoretical and genealogical development of the global class war to provide the theoretical foundation for the concrete application of it in the next chapter.

Introducing the global class war theoretical framework to explain China’s political and economic position responds precisely to Yueng’s (2007) call to “theorize back” and to “globalize

economic geography.” This is also a direct response to Harvey’s (1973/2009, 151) old call to create a truly “revolutionary theory” that “offers real choices for future moments in the social process by identifying immanent choices in an existing situation.” The global class war framework seeks to create formulations that go beyond simply explaining the scientific “root causes” of phenomenon, which most Marxist formulations do well. The global class war framework provides a lens in which to interpret and analyze real-world events and social relations in a way that can actually provide the means to struggle against imperialism (i.e., global capitalism) and thus create a possibility in bringing about “a humanizing social change” (Harvey 1973/2009, 145). Althusser (1968) once stated that one could engage in the class struggle through theory and philosophy, and this is precisely what theorizing within the global class war does. Though this cannot substitute for real practical class struggle (e.g., participating and joining a communist party), Lenin (1902/1987) in his essay *What is to be Done?* famously states “without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.” Thus, this chapter seeks to modestly help popularize the revolutionary theory of the global class war into the long traditions of revolutionary theory in order to create the theoretical foundations for real revolutionary change.

II. Attempts at Theorizing Global Class Formation—The Nation-State Still Matters!

Scholars have attempted to formulate theories of the development global class formation, or an “international capitalist class” since the 1960s (e.g., Barnet and Mueller 1974; Cox 1987; Gill 1990; Goldfrank 1977; Robinson 2004; Sklair 1995). For example, Stephen Hymer (1979, 262) noted that due to the continued development of global capitalism “an international capitalist class is emerging whose interests lie in the world economy as a whole and a system of international private property which allows free movement of capital between countries...there is

a strong tendency for the most powerful segments of the capitalist class increasingly to see their future in the further growth of the world market rather than its curtailment.” In a number of places the Dutch political economist Kees van der Pijl (1984, 1989, 1998) develops the idea of an “internationally class-conscious bourgeoisie” whose class consciousness develops out the objective class relations that come about from the transnationalization of capital that began in the post-war period and especially after the take over of the Fordist regime of accumulation by the neoliberal (or post-Fordist) regime of accumulation. The new “international bourgeoisie” is extra class conscious in the sense that they act consciously together based on their objective class interests to extract surplus value (i.e., exploit labor) across the world. This “new transnational” capitalist class “comprises the owners of transnational capital, that is, the group that owns the leading worldwide means of production as embodied principally in the [transnational corporations] and private financial institutions” (Robinson 2004, 47). On the other side, there is a global proletarian class that has developed due to their linkages within transnational production chains. Robinson (2004) notes that though this global proletarian class exists objectively (a class-in-itself), it is not subjectively conscious of its common exploitation across transnational production chains (i.e., it is not a class-for-itself). Robinson (2004) points to the reasons for the lack of class-consciousness on the part of the global proletariat are due to the continued existence of the nation-state (i.e., ideology and nationalism), and uneven development. I would also add that the political organization (i.e., a Party) necessary to deal with connecting the particular exploitation/oppression with the universal exploitation/oppression in the global capitalist system is not in existence to the degree that it needs to be to counter the global capitalist class.

The French political economist Christian Palloix (1975, 1977) has shown a historical sequence of the order of the internationalization of particular circuits of capital. The circuit of

commodity capital became internationalized first through trade in the world market; then came the internationalization of the money circuit through overseas ventures; finally, with the development of transnational corporations and neoliberal capitalism the circuit of productive capital internationalized which entailed factories moving geographically from more “developed” regions to “underdeveloped” regions. Robinson (2004, 16) states that because of the internationalization of the productive circuit of capital contemporary “[g]lobal capitalism is therefore not a collection of ‘national’ economies...Rather, this emerging new stage in world capitalism points to a supersession through transnational integration of ‘national’ economies.” Thus, the further development of capital expanding across the globe “is establishing the material conditions for the rise of the bourgeoisie whose coordinates are no longer national” (Robinson 2004, 37). Globalization, or neoliberal global capitalism, is an “epochal change” which creates a new basis for the class struggle to take place. As Robinson (2004, 39) puts it: “[t]he locus of class and group relations in the new epoch is not the nation-state but the global system.” In the previous “epoch” of capitalism production and industries were nationally organized, now “[d]ifferent phases of production become broken down into component phases that are detachable and can be dispersed around the world” (Robinson 2004, 17). The “decentralization of the production process” across the globe has caused Hardt and Negri (2000) to interpret the new epoch of global capitalism “as empire with no [power] center” instead of classifying global capital as imperialist with clear origins of power. And while Arrighi (2007) sees the “emergence of China” and China’s rise to the global economic stage as a showing of the “ongoing shift of the epicenter of the global political economy from North America to East Asia.” Robinson (2004, 129) has been arguing for quite sometime that “the hegemonic baton will likely be passed from the United States, not to a new hegemonic nation-state or even to a regional bloc, but to a

transnational configuration, the global capitalist historic bloc.” Out of the process of capital expanding more extensively across the globe “[t]ransnational capital has become the dominant, or hegemonic, fraction of capital on a world scale” (Robinson 2004, 21). Additionally, it is “the logic of *global* accumulation, rather than of *national* accumulation, that guides the political and economic behavior of this ruling bloc” (Robinson 2004, 75). Thus, it is this new “logic of global accumulation” that must be taken in account when analyzing class relations in the 21st century. For Robinson (2004) and Hardt and Negri (2000) the current phase of global capitalism should not be deemed “imperialist.” which implies a global order with clear geographic origins of power, but as “Empire” because power and production are decentralized. This formulation will be challenged below.

From a Marxist perspective, as structural economic and class relations changes occur so does the form the state. Robinson (2004, 87) argues that “[u]nder globalization...the capitalist state has increasingly acquired the form of a [transnational state]” (Robinson 2004, 87). Robinson (2004, 88) continues to argue that the “nation-state is neither retaining its primacy nor disappearing but is being transformed and absorbed into the larger structure of a [transnational state (TNS)].” The new transnational state apparatuses take political and economic forms. The political forms are international institutions such as the UN, the EU, etc., and the economic forms that TNS apparatuses take are the IMF, World Bank, WTO, etc. Additionally, the “supersession” of the nation state as the “organizing principle of social life under capitalism” due to the internationalization of capital has occurred to such a degree that it is “structurally impossible for individual nations to sustain independent or even autonomous economies, political systems, and social structures [;] globalization reconfigures world social forces in a very

dramatic way” (Robinson 2004, 45; 102). This is problematic in many ways, which will be explored below.

In addition to seeing the irrelevancy of the nation-state in organizing political and class relations, Robinson (200, 80-81) sees neoliberalism as “the policy ‘grease’ of global capitalism.” and by being “[g]reased by neoliberalism, global capitalism tears down all nonmarket structures that have in the past placed limits on, or acted as a protective layer against, the accumulation of capital. Nonmarket spheres of human activity – public spheres managed by states and private spheres linked to community and family – are broken up, commodified, and transferred to capital.” This is similar to Harvey’s (2005,2) conception of neoliberalism that “there has everywhere been an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s...almost all states...have embraced...some version of neoliberal theory” (Harvey 2005, 2). Both Harvey’s and Robinson’s conception of neoliberalism is limiting in the sense that they do not sufficiently “acknowledge those states that are not only *not* neoliberal, but are antagonistic to neoliberalism” (Ford 2017, 43). It is important to theorize about the contemporary form of global capitalism (neoliberalism), but we must also theorize about how to transcend global capitalism. Though Robinson (2004) admits that challenges to the global capitalist class can come from “specific nation-states” captured by subordinate groups and from the “economic and political elites” of places like China or Russia – because they can choose the degree to which they integrate into the global capitalist system – Robinson does not emphasize enough the importance of the nation-state and other agents in resisting global capitalism. Despite the development of an objective international capitalist class that exists due to the internationalization of all three circuits of capital, the rise of a “global state” will not come to fruition as Robinson (2004) alludes to because the nation-state plays a key role in both

maintaining global capitalism and struggling against it. In striking contrast with Robinson (2004), Becker and Puryear (2015, 20) point out that “it is true that capital has taken on an increasingly transnational character, with major firms holding permanent interests in multiple countries. This has not developed to the point that capitalist states have lost their character as the executive committee of the ruling class of a particular country.” In addition, “the particular powers offered by nation-states – managing borders, trade routes, policing, etc. – are indispensable for providing order and security to global capitalism.”

Most importantly for our purposes, the nation-state still plays a fundamental role in resisting global capital. So-called “international” economic and political institutions like the IMF and the UN are, in the last instance, dominated and controlled by interests of global capital, which is headquartered in the US. Examples of who really controls “international” institutions such as the UN can be seen with how the Korean War and the sanctions and the war on Iraq in 1990-1991 were supported by the members of the UN. With the case of Korea, at the time the USSR (a member of the Security Council) was boycotting the UN because of the UN’s refusal to allow the People’s Republic of China into the UN, thus all the other members of the Security Council (Western imperialist states) voted to invade the Korean Peninsula. The UN authorized the invasion of Iraq in 1990, thus supporting the interests of global capital in creating a space for capital to spread geographically. Through these two cases we can see how “international” institutions such as the UN and the IMF clearly represent the interests of the imperialist countries. We also know that the class character of particular states that exist on the national scale can change depending on what class is in control of its state apparatuses. There are “capitalist” states and “socialist” states, each consolidating and perpetuating the interests of the class that dominates them. A socialist state perpetuates the interests of the proletariat, while the

capitalist state perpetuates the interests of imperialism and the bourgeoisie.¹⁴ Thus, if the working class takes over a particular state apparatus on the national scale they can deploy the different apparatuses of the state to perpetuate the interests of the working class internally and externally. This entails resisting so-called “international” institutions as well and attempting to develop economically and socially on an independent basis. State apparatuses such as the military can also be used by the proletariat to defend and perpetuate its class interests.

Robinson (2004) and others claim that we live in a different era that cannot be termed “imperialist” in the 20th century. While Robinson is right that we live in a different time today, it is, as we will see, just a *different phase of imperialism* that shapes contemporary political economy. Becker and Puryear (2015, 9) point out “we are clearly still living in the era of monopoly capitalism, dominated by finance capital. A handful of corporations and banks, based primarily in the United States and Europe, have unprecedented power in domestic and foreign policy, as well as the organization of production on a global scale.” It is clear that the core imperialist countries still heavily dominate the export of capital and dominate the world capitalist economy. This is occurring to the degree that 83% of foreign direct investment outflows come from the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD Factbook 2013), which is composed of countries from North America, Europe, Australia, and some countries in South America that are led by governments that have a favorable view of US influence in South America. In addition, does not the existence of NATO show that we are still living in a period of imperialism rather than a “decentralized Empire”? Instead of the one individual imperialist country going to war with an oppressed nation,

¹⁴ A socialist state can be defined as consisting of four primary and fundamental characteristics: 1) the creation of a new state and government on top of the old smashed state of the bourgeoisie through a workers revolution; 2) public ownership of the means of production; 3) central economic planning; and 4) government monopoly on foreign trade (see Party for Socialism and Liberation 2015 for more of a detailed explication of what a socialist state entails).

imperialist countries have instead used NATO to go to war with sovereign countries together, and thus limiting the financial and political burden on individual imperialist nations by spreading it around amongst themselves. The NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy during air raids of the former socialist state of Yugoslavia is a showing of the global class character of NATO. Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin in an interview with former *60 Minutes* correspondent Mike Wallace in 2000 stated that the Chinese embassy was clearly marked and at a distance away from the original targets of the bombing.

It is clear that we must interpret the contemporary international political economy on a different basis than Robinson (2004), Harvey (2005), and others do because scholars of global class formation and those that deploy the neoliberal framework to critique contemporary conditions do not take in account enough the actually-existing resistance to global capital and neoliberalism, which includes particular nation-states and political agents. As Ford (2017, 50) states: “[w]e need to open up our Eurocentric academic frameworks and learn from those who have done what we want to do: break free from imperialism and exploitation.” But, before we can clearly establish an the alternative theoretical framework to understand international political economy and lay out what the components out of the global class war we must first do it by giving a brief genealogy of the development of the theory of the global class war which was created through real-life political struggles within communist parties in the United States.

III. Sam Marcy and the Development of the Global Class War¹⁵

Sam Marcy was an important 20th century communist theoretician who is unfortunately ignored by most Marxist scholars, with few exceptions (e.g., Malott and Ford 2015). Sam Marcy

¹⁵ In this section I am simply *tracing* the historical origins of how the global class war framework came to be. Within the confines of this section I can only focus on the socialist parties where the global class war framework came out of and the socialist parties that have installed the global class war theoretical framework as their theoretical foundation.

first formulated the concept of the global class war in a 1953 document (not publically published until 1979) that internally addressed Socialist Workers Party members (this document created the theoretical basis for the SWP to split in the 1950s). Before diving into the specifics of the document, we must explore, briefly, the political environment that it was written within and what made Marcy write it in the first place. Sam Marcy was a leading member in the Socialist Workers Party during the immediate post-war World War II period. He left the Communist Party in the 1940s because of its political dependence on and subjection to Moscow and his belief that the CP's party line was becoming disconnected from American working class interests. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was a Trotskyist party. He led an important branch of the SWP in Buffalo, New York, where they were extremely active organizing the working class. Historically, the SWP showed that socialists could still critique the Soviet Union, while unconditionally defending the Soviet Union *against imperialism*, despite the Soviet Union's revisionist and Stalinist leadership. Instead of simply parroting the mouthpieces of the imperialist countries, the SWP created a *revolutionary* critique of the Soviet Union from the left that countered the dominant capitalist and bourgeois critiques of it. For example, though the SWP stated the Soviet bureaucracy was separated the masses and oppressive in various ways, the SWP acknowledged that the Soviet social system was more advanced than the social systems that existed in the capitalist countries. When imperialism was targeting the Soviet Union and spreading its propaganda against it the SWP would point out the good things about the Soviet Union to workers, like universal healthcare and full employment, etc. However, during the immediate post-war period there was increasing and growing anti-Sovietism from cadres within the SWP. Sam Marcy and Vincent Copeland (who was also from Buffalo) did not agree with this development within the SWP; thus, a Marcy/Copeland faction within the SWP began to emerge.

Tensions within the SWP came to an apex in 1948, the 100th year of the publishing of the *Communist Manifesto*, when the SWP published a pamphlet titled “Manifesto Against Wall Street and the Kremlin.” It was clearly a document that showcased the SWPs new “third campist” position, and their strong position against Stalin’s so-called “reactionary foreign policy” (Marcy 1979). In addition to this, the SWP at first took an open position of neutrality on the Korean War in relation to US and Soviet influence; this is showcased by two articles published in 1950: “Hands Off Korean Peoples Right to Decide Own Fate.” and “Let Korean People Decide Own Fate Free from U.S. or Kremlin” (Marcy 1979, 18). The SWP called for the US to get out its troops out, but the SWP also called for the Soviets to get out, “when the fact was, only Soviet and Chinese military assistance and troops could possibly provide the means to drive US forces out” (Marcy 1979, 18). In 1950, the SWP did not classify China or North Korea (DPRK) as workers’ states, thus for the SWP, the Korean War was fought “between two puppets of US and Kremlin.” It was not until later in the same year that the SWP changed its position on the matter and started defending North Korea against imperialism. Also because the SWP did not acknowledge the DPRK as a workers state until 1955, its new defense of it against imperialism late in 1950 lay on very shaky theoretical grounds. If the SWP was going to defend the Korean Peninsula against imperialism and still maintain that the DPRK was not a workers state and that the North Korean communists were puppets of the Soviet Union it gave no theoretical basis and justification as to why workers in the United States should defend the DPRK against imperialist aggression. There was a theoretical gap within the SWP in the post-war period that Marcy witnessed and sought to fill. Global political economic realities changed dramatically after the end of World War II, and there was a lack of theoretical understanding of the global situation. As

we will see, one comes up with different conclusions depending on how one interprets what is the primary contradiction and depending on what one sees as the primary scale of analysis.

Marcy finally openly went outside the SWP's party line by declaring China as a workers' state, against SWP's Trotskyite characterization of it as a "degenerative workers state." Marcy's later global class war document rejected the "crazy-quilt, patchwork view of the world held by the SWP, a view that divided the world up into one workers' state [(the Soviet Union)], 'in between' states like China, and capitalist states" (Marcy 1979, 22). Rather, Marcy wanted the Party and the working class to see what really existed was an international class struggle between the two great, world historical classes *and their states*. Marcy wanted the workers movement to understand "the post-war reality and to effect an unwavering, unconditional, rock-hard defense of the Soviet Union and the new workers states in Eastern Europe and China in the new epoch of the global class war" (Marcy 1979, 25). He called it a new epoch because the inter-imperialist rivalries that had characterized World War I and II would now be thoroughly subordinated to the imperialists' prosecution of the struggle against the expanded workers' state camp. We can see why this happens, from a political economic perspective. As more and more states become dominated by the socialist mode of production it closes off spaces for Western capital to temporarily fix itself. Thus, the capitalist states, which play a major role of creating the social and spatial conditions needed for continued capitalist accumulation, deploy both violent and ideological means to struggle against socialism/communism domestically and abroad.

In the 1953 document "Global Class War and the Destiny of American Labor." Marcy sought out to critique the SWP's avoidance of an unconditional and uncompromising defense of the Soviet Union *against imperialism*.¹⁶ For Marcy, a defense of the Soviet Union against

¹⁶ One *can* unconditionally support the Soviet social system and the Soviet Union in general against imperialism, but still critique the negative aspects of the Soviet superstructure.

imperialism is crucial because the Soviet Union's continued existence benefits not just workers in the United States, but the global proletarian class camp in general. In the document he argues three main things: (1) that US working class movement could have no destiny "independent of the international class struggle, and that the fate of US labor was inextricably bound up with the progress or failure of foreign revolutionaries and especially tied to the fate of the Soviet Union;" (2) that "the working class in the US is part of the world proletariat and consequently part of the global class camp of the proletariat and that the real world and historic interests of US labor are decided by, and subordinate to, the interests of that global class camp;" and (3) that the Korean War was the opening battle of the global class war" (Marcy 1979, 25). The Korean War, was not a war between two states, but between two global classes and between two differing modes of production. If it were not for the efforts of the Chinese communists coming to the aid of the North Korean communists, the whole peninsula would be dominated by imperialism. Ford (2017: 44) explicates the two global class war camps clearly:

The world has been divided into two primary camps: on the one side is the imperialist camp, those states and forces of capital expansion and dispossession. On the other side is the proletarian class camp, which includes the states and forces of the exploited, dispossessed, and oppressed. In this camp are the socialist states, the states that have waged successful anti colonial struggles, the oppressed within colonized nations, and the exploited within the imperialist nations.

Viewing the class struggle in this way, "we see that the advances made by organized labor in one country were propelled and enabled by the global proletarian struggle" (Malott and Ford 2015, 53).

What eventually, and finally led to the break of SWP and the establishment of Workers Work Party (WWP), that took hold of the global class war as its theoretical foundation in 1959,

was the SWP's initial response the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. The SWP defended the Hungarian Uprising from the first day "on the basis of the scantiest reports in the capitalist press and when it was obvious that the revolt had the sympathy of the first bourgeois observers" (Marcy 1979: 27). Vince Copeland who was a part of the Marcy faction within the SWP, and also played a key role in the establishment of WWP, wrote an article on the matter titled "The Class Character of the Hungarian Uprising" (1956). In the polemic, he argued that the revolt in Hungary was a "bourgeois democratic counter-revolution," and that Soviet intervention prevented capitalist restoration. The analysis of the Hungarian Uprising was the first event that tested the theory of the global class war. The demands made during the Hungarian Uprising for increased democracy and less parasitic bureaucracy were justified. But, what kind of "democracy" is the key question to ask when a particular movement is demanding more democracy (i.e., one must attempt to decipher if a movement is trying to increase democracy for the bourgeoisie or the proletariat). Every movement must be analyzed in relation with global class forces. The uprising was clearly anti-communist and without the existence of a Marxist leadership. For example, the government that took power for a brief period of time before Soviet intervention left the Warsaw Pact, which was a "Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance" between socialist countries, and declared "neutrality." In the era monopoly capitalism, i.e., imperialism, real "neutrality" in relation to the global class war is impossible economically and politically. Since 1989 as socialist/communist governments have collapsed we have seen that the new governments are anti-communist in character, have integrated into global capitalism and have largely joined the global imperialist class camp.

The WWP (among others of course) was extremely active in leftist and radical politics in the 1960s and 70s, and still are active today though on a smaller scale. However, much later the

WWP would split in 2004, and out of this split, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) was created. Both parties use the same global class war framework as their theoretical foundation, but no reason was given by either side for the split. One member of the PSL noted that the PSL is “more active and its cadre is younger” (Personal Correspondence, Michael Kowalchuk). Finally, and as already stated, recently the global class war theoretical framework has begun to enter academe where scholars such as Malott and Ford (2015) are bringing in the global class war to perform philosophical class struggle. Althusser (1968) explains the “philosophical struggle” as the “sector of the class struggle between world outlooks.” Global class war theorists are struggling for the *hegemony* of the global proletarian camp’s outlook over the imperialist global camp’s outlook. The global class war framework was created during a time when two fifths of the world’s population lived under a communist government and during a time when the capitalist mode of production was waning and the socialist mode of production was ascending. At present, the global class war theoretical framework, as we will see, has been updated to understand a world that is largely dominated by global capitalism.

Thus, seeing the world through the lens of the global class war one can conceptualize neoliberalism differently than Robinson (2004), Harvey (2005), Wang (2003), and others. Rather than conceptualizing neoliberalism as an economic and ideological condition that is being applied everywhere, neoliberalism is:

an ideological and political offensive waged by the global bourgeoisie against the ascendant power of organized labor in the advanced capitalist countries *and*...the solidified power of the global working class that resulted from the wave of socialist and anti-colonial struggles starting with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and picking up steam after World War II (Ford 2017: 36, emphasis added).

In sum, the global class war does not limit itself to just expounding the global class relations that have developed out of the internationalization and monopolization of capital. This method ignores the different kinds of states involved and their key role in organizing global class relations. The global class war analyzes how the two major classes and their states struggle against each other on a global scale.

IV. “The USSR is history and so is the 20th century”—Not So Fast!

As we saw in the last chapter Wang (2016) argued that we cannot deploy 20th century methods to fix 21st century problems, and that the 20th century ended “prematurely” after the collapse of the USSR. One could argue that since the USSR has ceased to exist and that there is no longer a real “socialist bloc” where two-fifths of the world’s population once lived under a government that was controlled by a communist party, that the global class war framework is archaic. However, what I want to argue and show here is that we are still living in the era of monopoly capitalism and imperialism; we are just in a new phase of imperialism, despite the massive integration of nation-states into the global capital system. The phases of imperialism can be seen as four distinct yet interconnected phases due to how imperialism is in a constant “changing and dynamic state attempting to contain the contradictions created by its own expansion.” and no matter which phase of imperialism exists the “tendency towards war is inherent in the system” (Becker and Puryear 2015: 67). The phases of imperialism can be classified as follows: 1) the colonial phase; 2) the Cold War phase; 3) the first post-Cold War phase; and 4) the present phase.

Lenin (1939) argued that the era of monopoly capitalism created the material conditions for the first phase of imperialism to arise. Competition within capitalist countries eventually created monopoly capital, which saw the merger of bank and industrial capital (creating finance

capital). Monopolies and finance capital began looking to expand outside their national borders to solve internal overaccumulation problems. This led to the export of capital from many different European powers to geographic areas that had yet to be dominated by capitalist market relations. The old competition between capitalist enterprises was replaced by competition between advanced capitalist states, “each led by financial oligarchies and each increasingly building up and relying on the use of military force” (Becker and Puryear 2015: 7). The first phase of imperialism, the necessity of colonies, and the inter-imperialist struggles over them are rooted in the monopoly stage of capitalism itself. Lenin cited figures from geographer Alexander Supan showing that in 1876 European powers controlled slightly more than 10 percent of the territory of Africa, and by 1900 90.4 of the continent was occupied by colonial/imperialist powers (Lenin 1939 in Becker and Puryear 2015). The two World Wars that occurred in the 20th century can be interpreted as inter-imperialist struggles that were inevitable due to the political economic logics of monopoly capitalism.

The end of World War II brought a new phase of imperialism. The Soviet Union emerged out of WWII as a superpower despite losing 26 million people during the war. Workers’ revolutions were spreading throughout the world and it haunted the global imperialist camp. The trend during the immediate post-WWII period saw many victorious workers’ revolutions and national liberation movements often led by communist parties. Thus, the imperialist countries did everything in their power to curb this revolutionary trend. In order to do this the imperialists had to prevent another repeat of inter-imperialist rivalry and wars. Rather than punishing the losers of WWII as was the case with WWI the United States helped Germany and Japan rebuild their economies so they could act as bulwarks in a front against communism and the Soviet Union. This is a clear example of the waning of inter-imperialist struggle and the emerging focus on a

global struggle between the imperialists and the communist bloc. This development can also been seen with the establishment of institutions such as NATO in 1949, and other so-called “international” political and economic institutions such as the IMF. As countries freed themselves from imperialist domination through national liberation movements and socialist revolutions, they naturally made alliances with each other, which in turn created a new international political order.¹⁷ As Becker and Puryear (2015, 33) succinctly put it:

What followed WWII was the reorganization of world politics. On one side was the imperialist camp led by the United States. On the other side was the camp of the workers and oppressed peoples based on the rise of the Soviet Union as a global power and the radical empowerment of revolutionary forces in Europe and in Asia. In the following decades, revolutionary forces swept through Latin America and Africa as well.

The “Cold War” was thus in fact “a global class war, in which the imperialists suppressed the tendency towards inter-imperialist conflict and re-directed it towards the socialist and national liberation movements” (Becker and Puryear 2015, 18). The existence of a proletarian class camp caused imperialism to enter a second phase where imperialism worked collectively to repel and defeat its only real challenger, the international working class and their states. It is within this period of imperialism that Sam Marcy developed the global class war framework to argue for the primacy of the international situation in struggling against the capitalist system.

¹⁷ Of course there are ideological splits within the proletarian class bloc, and they do not always act collectively as one global class (see e.g., Copeland 1975). Nonetheless, the socialist states had objective similarities based in their socialist social formations and had an objective class interest in struggling against the imperialist camp. From 1945 into the 1970s it can generally be said that the global proletarian class camp was winning the global class war. However, it was ultimately “the division within the socialist bloc nations between the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, a split that began as an ideological and political debate but later degenerated into a state-to-state struggle, which changed this relationship of force. [Thus], [i]nstead of directing its fire against the entire socialist bloc countries, the United States utilized the Sino-Soviet split by winning over the leadership of the People’s Republic of China to an anti-Soviet alliance” (Becker and Puryear 2015, 43). Despite the horrible consequences of the split—by which both the CCP and the CPSU can be criticized for not realizing how the split benefits imperialism—on the global proletarian class camp, the split allowed the Maoists within the CCP to openly create a critique of Stalin from the left that countered Khrushchev’s revisionist critique from the right.

When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991 it ignited another new phase imperialism. In this era of imperialism, the global imperialist class bloc sought to finish off the re-division of the world by dividing up post-socialist countries back into the networks of global capitalism. The existence of the USSR allowed many countries like Syria, Libya, and Iraq to develop on an independent and nationalist basis i.e., they were not neo-colonies of the imperialist states. However, after the fall of the USSR and the socialist bloc in general, many of these countries had to reintegrate with the global capitalist system to some degree to prevent imperialist aggression and it has been the goal of the imperialist states in the immediate post-Cold War phase of imperialism to dismantle these independent and nationalist states to create a complete and unrestrained global dominance.

Thus, because The Soviet Union does not exist anymore, the People's Republic of China, and other formerly socialist countries like Vietnam have installed drastic market reforms, though unevenly, and most states in the world have integrated into the global capitalist system in some fashion, the global class war perspective and Lenin's (1939) theory of imperialism has to be updated to explain contemporary conditions. Brian Becker and Eugene Puryear's (2015) important book *Imperialism in the 21st Century: Updating Lenin's Theory a Century Later*, do just this. They argue that:

it hardly is of any analytical service to deem "imperialist" every country that exports capital, or attempts to expand its access to natural resources (an inevitable feature of any society based on the growth of productive forces and population). To call every country with these features 'imperialist' would encompass so many states, that it would blur the lines between their relative power. It would make it impossible to understand their position in the world order. From [a global class war] perspective, we use the terminology of "imperialist" to describe those states that are dominating and seeking to dominate that global system—not those who are trying to finally rise within it (Becker and Puryear 2015, 63).

Countries like China that own a large amount of US debt, have to find avenues to invest this capital, before the value of the dollar collapses in another crisis. This entails Chinese investment in places like Africa (see Lim 2010), and the development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (which will be explored below) enables China to invest surplus capital into other regions (Hong 2016). Just because China is investing in other regions besides its own country, does not mean it qualifies itself as imperialist. China opened up to global capital in 1978, not to serve the interests of capital, but as a conscious effort to develop its productive forces to materially support a socialist society that is prosperous. China's current social formation since opening is contradictory and complex. As Marxists, we know that the superstructure of a particular social formation (its politics, ideology, etc.) is determined by the economic foundation on which it stands. However, as Goldstein (2013) points out, "the economic foundation of China is not homogeneous." The economic foundation in China is partly socialist and partly capitalist; half of China's workers are still employed by the state-owned sector (Hurst 2015). The key question though is which mode of production is dominant in the Chinese social formation. The superstructure in China is also not homogenous. There are those (like the CCP, the People's Liberation Army, and the original ideological doctrine of the People's Republic of China) that declare that socialism is still the foundation of China. There are also agents who push for continual opening up to imperialism and capitalist market reforms, and most importantly those that push for *political reform*. The calls for political reform are coming from the imperialist class camp and their allies inside China. Political reform in China in the sense that I mean here would mean "the right for the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie to organize politically, either inside the party, outside the party or both" (Goldstein 2013).

In order to decipher if the socialist foundation is dominant in China, we must dive into a concrete and empirical example rather than continue to talk in abstraction. A recent empirical example that displays how the socialist structures still remain in China is how China dealt with the 2007-2008 global economic crisis. The way China's government dealt with the 2008 crisis was drastically different than how the Western capitalist governments dealt with the economic crisis. China was heavily affected by the crisis because of its dependence on exports to the capitalist West. 67,000 factories were shutdown and 20 million jobs were lost quickly in export manufacturing centers along the southeast coast, and especially in Guangdong Province, from the lack of demand for China's products of export (Lardy 2012; Wong 2008). However, in 2009 when GDP expansion in China was at its lowest in almost a decade, consumption grew, wages went up, and the government created enough jobs to deal with the massive layoffs that occurred due to the global economic crisis (Lardy 2012). Lardy asks how could this happen in the face of such a grand global economic crisis and during a time when employment in "export-oriented industries was collapsing." Lardy (2012) cites three things the Chinese state planning apparatus was able to come up with to deal with the crisis in a way that would limit the damage to the Chinese people. This plan to deal with the global economic crisis, as Lardy (2012) points out, was in the works in 2003 well before the 2007-2008 economic crisis occurred but was pushed ahead to deal with the crisis. This preconceived plan is an example of central planning and the socialist structure that still exists in the Chinese complex social formation. The first aspect of the plan was to increase state investment in construction activities that "offset a very large portion of the job losses in the export sector" (Lardy 2012). Secondly, though "the growth of employment slowed slightly, wages continued to rise," thus enabling consumption to rise. Thirdly, and similarly, "the government continued its programs of increasing payments to those drawing

pensions and raising transfer payments to China's lowest-income residents." Monthly pension payments went up by 10 percent, "in January 2009, substantially more than the 5.9 percent increase in consumer prices in 2008...[and] [t]he Ministry of Civil Affairs raised transfer payments to about 70 million of China's lowest-income citizens by a third" (Lardy 2012, 23). Finally, Lardy mentions that during the crisis the Ministry of Railroads also introduced eight plans to be completed by 2020, to soak up much of the surplus-labor that was created by the crisis. The World Bank called it "perhaps the biggest single planned program of passenger rail investment there has ever been in one country" (Oster 2010). We see that income went up, consumption went up and massive unemployment was avoided in China during the 2007-2008 global economic crisis, while the capitalist countries continued to face austerity, recession, mass unemployment, and all the while bailing out the big banks that started the crisis in the first place. As Goldstein (2013) argues: "The reversal of the effects of the crisis in China is the direct result of national planning, state-owned enterprises, state-owned banking and the policy decisions of the Chinese Communist Party." But these institutions that are based on the "remaining structures of Chinese socialism...are the very institutions that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, wall Street and London want to reduce and eventually destroy." It is clear that the socialist foundation in China's social formation is still dominant, but it does not mean in any way that it is guaranteed to stay that way in a time when imperialist forces inside and outside China are gaining strength. If China were fully capitalist like India it would have the slums and poverty that characterize Indian cities (Amin 2013).

China's current state does not contain all four of the socialist characteristics named above that define what a socialist state is, but in a historical sense it most certainly did. From 1949 to 1978 it maintained those four characteristics and because of the existence of the proletarian class

camp China has been able to rise in the face of imperialist intervention and aggression. And while we can condemn a larger country from bullying or performing chauvinist acts against another smaller country, as Marxists we have to use the term “imperialist” scientifically. Even Maoists within the Chinese Communist Party used the term “imperialist” against the former USSR unscientifically and thus had a negative impact for the global proletarian class camp by dividing it up ideologically.

The current phase of imperialism can be seen as the unipolar era in which the United States is the clear global hegemon. Since the fall of the USSR the imperialist class camp has been winning in the global class war. It is within this context that we should understand contemporary international political economy. The current emerging powers like Russia, China, and India have developed by largely following the rules set in place by global capital, and their rise has economically benefited imperialism immensely in many ways. Though these countries “do not seek military conflict with imperialism...their growing assertiveness could also destabilize the current world order, and thus re-open the possibility of inter-imperialist conflict and war between current allies” (Becker and Puryear 2015, 66). By examining imperialism as historical phases through the global class war lens we see that so-called “20th century relations” are not yet over, and that the state that exists on the national scale still plays a major role in both resisting and complying with global capitalism. In addition, by seeing the current phase of imperialism as being the unipolar phase of imperialism we see that a victory by nationalist and/or socialist/communist forces in a particular historically oppressed country is a victory for the global proletarian class camp because it closes off spaces for unrestrained imperialist control, and limits the spaces where global capital can temporarily fix itself. This explication of the global class war helps us create the foundation for our next chapter, which deploys the global

class war concretely with historical examples of the Chinese Communist Party. Further, it helps to develop a global class-consciousness. When the masses grab ahold of this global class-consciousness they become the “organic intellectuals” that Gramsci (1971) talks about, and the material force that Mao calls for.

V. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Understanding post-reform China through the global class war perspective and in the context of the current era of imperialism, we see a country that is simply trying to rise within a system dominated by the global imperialist class camp, its “international” political and economic institutions, and the logics of global capital. Though China’s opening up in general has helped global capital to temporarily solve its crisis of overaccumulation in the late 1960s and 1970s, I argue that China is rising and developing in a fashion that offers an alternative for other developing countries to Western dominated developmental methods. And because of the historical communist values that root back to the days of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong, China’s rise *within* the global capitalist system challenges Western economic and political hegemony in the global economy in general, and in particular neoliberal capitalism. China, and more specifically the Chinese Communist Party, represent “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism,” and historically global capitalism in general.

This resistance to neoliberal capitalism, the unipolar dominance of the US and Western international political economic institutions can be seen by the development of the newly established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which is similar to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), but is an “Asian” bank that is actually controlled by Asian countries. Mirsha (2016, 164) states: the AIIB “can be termed as a manifestation of Xi Jinping’s idea that Asian powers should be directly responsible for key decisions that might shape the future of the

continent in times to come. In a broader economic sense, it mirrors his idea of ‘Asia for Asians.’” The AIIB is a bank that invests in large infrastructure projects across the Asia-Pacific region and Eurasia. As Xi Jinping stated: “The AIIB will enable China to undertake more global obligations and help make the current global economic governance system more just, equitable and effective” (Teo 2016). Additionally, Xi lauded the AIIB as a bank that would work to invest in “high quality, low-cost” projects” (Teo 2016). The establishment of the AIIB has shown that China has successfully “tried to address the concerns of developing countries that have been feeling marginalized and under-represented at the international financial forums” (Mishra 2016, 172). The AIIB is also seen as way to finance China’s New Silk Road Strategy, and to spearhead China’s “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) initiatives (Hong 2016; Mishra 2016). The “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “Maritime Silk Road of the Twenty-First Century” respectively are “contemporary versions of the centuries-old Silk Road trade routes” (Hong 2016, 1). The OBOR initiative is an attempt to “boost regional trade and economic development in Asia through inter-regional infrastructure improvement and industrial transfer...[through] high-speed railway connectivity and maritime trade via deep-water ports and harbors” across Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific region (Hong 2016, 5). As of late, China has been

winning over many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America with preferential loans and grants for infrastructure development. Since the announcement of the AIIB proposal, many Asian countries have been eager to gain financial assistance from China for large-scale public infrastructure projects that they are incapable of self-funding (Hong 2016, 7)

The US has refused to join and has reservations about their allies such as the UK and Germany already joining the AIIB, marking a possible emerging rift between the classical imperialist powers.

After 2008, China has become “more proactive, assertive and globally driven...Xi has abandoned China’s long-held policy of ‘keeping a low profile in international affairs’ adhered to since the 1980s...China’s foreign policy is now more centralized [and] proactive” (Hong 2016, 4). Hong (2016) and Mirsha (2016) allude to the possibility of the development of a new “Beijing Consensus” that will eventually take over global hegemony or match the “Washington Consensus.” This is cynical at worse and misguided at best. China is drastically different today from the times of Mao Zedong, but there is still much left over from the Maoist era. For example, Zhou Enlai, the first Premier of the PRC, formulated the guidelines for its foreign aid programs called “Eight Principles,” which are still followed today in China strictly. Zhou Enlai announced the guidelines when he was visiting Africa from December 1963 to February 1964. The “Eight Principles” are:

mutual benefit; no conditions attached; the no-interest or low-interest loans would not create a debt burden for the recipient country; to help the recipient nation develop its economy; not to create its dependence on China; to help the recipient country with projects that needs less capital and quick returns; the aid in kind must be of high quality at the world market price; to ensure that the technology can be learned and mastered by the locals; the Chinese experts and technicians working for the aid recipient country are treated equally as the local ones with no extra benefits to them (Jiang 2011).

China is often criticized for the principle of “no strings attached,” but China defends this principle by upholding the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” which

respects recipient countries’ right to independently select their own path and model of development, and believes that every country should explore a development path suitable to its unique conditions. Therefore, China never uses foreign aid as a means to interfere in recipient countries’ internal affairs or seek political privileges for itself (Jiang 2011).

AIIB financed projects for the OBOR and other projects are of course not without problems and resistances. Recently in Hamantota, the southern port town of 12,000 people in Sri Lanka where China has invested and rented out part of the port for the broader OBOR initiative, there have been large protests by the people living there over fear of eviction and displacement (Al Jazeera 2017). In any large infrastructural and developmental project in underdeveloped countries land dispossessions are going to be unavoidable at times. These dispossessions should be struggled against, but it does not mean that we should not continue to differentiate the global class character of China and the AIIB. In the context of the current unipolar imperialist world we live in, the AIIB should be a welcomed development. Long time Australian defense and intelligence analyst Hugh White (2014) certainly knows the global class character of the AIIB. In this statement Hugh White showcases the fear the global imperialist class camp has of the AIIB even though it is a gross mischaracterization of it and of China itself:

Do not imagine for a moment that the AIIB is just about economics. For decades, US strategic and political pre-eminence has been underwritten by Washington's primary role in international financial institutions, like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. So, Americans know how effective the AIIB could prove to be in expanding China's influence in Asia, not just economically, but politically and strategically too.

Though the same logics of capital are being deployed within the AIIB with debt-financed infrastructure projects, the AIIB is clearly *qualitatively* different than Western examples of loaning money to developing countries where institutions like the IMF enforce structural adjustment policies of the debt-incumbent countries, in order to continue to receive money to fund large developmental projects. The AIIB is developing in the face of international neoliberal political economic institutions and is showcasing to the world that alternatives are available in the era of unipolar imperialism. When analyzing the AIIB, or anything else for that matter, "a

Marxist should see the whole as well as the parts. A frog in a well says, ‘The sky is no bigger than the mouth of the well.’ That is untrue, for the sky is not just the size of the mouth of the well. If it said, ‘A part of the sky is the size of the mouth of a well’, that would be true, for it tallies with the facts” (Mao 1972, 221).

VI. Conclusion

Through this explication of the global class war theoretical framework to better understand post-reform and contemporary China, we see that a global class war analysis of China does not mean a blind defense of China, the Chinese Communist Party and the theoretical notion of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics,” and “market socialism.” The global class war theoretical framework allows us to both defend the PRC against the global imperialist class camp *and* critique the developmental methods the CCP currently upholds and applies, as we will do in the next chapter through a historical investigation of the Chinese Communist Party. This chapter has also shown how one should treat and use the concept imperialism. One cannot just call every country that invests surplus capital into other countries “imperialist,” especially in the era of imperialism we are currently within. I have argued that the socialist foundation in China is still dominant in the contemporary Chinese social formation despite the capitalist reforms and the increased power of the bourgeoisie within China. Despite all its flaws, the Chinese Communist Party maintains and perpetuates the socialist foundation in China and thus should be looked upon as an example of “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism” (Ford 2017), and should be defended on this basis and within this context.

Chapter Five: The Most Difficult Thing In Life

“Here we are making the socialist revolution and we do not know where the bourgeoisie is...it is within the Party” –Mao Zedong, 1973

I. Introduction

Now that we have an understanding of where contemporary China fits within international political economic space through the global class war framework, we can now analyze and evaluate the Chinese Communist Party more concretely. Many social scientists have predicted that when China began to allow global capital to come in and exploit its people – for the sake of developing the productive forces and technology transfers – that the Chinese Communist Party was going to collapse from within. There is always constant talk within bourgeois think tanks and the popular press that the CCP is on the verge of dissolving through increased political reforms (Brodsgaard and Zheng 2006). However, we see currently in 2017 that this is not the case, in fact the CCP continues to grow while continuing to implement “reform and opening up.” There are currently 90 million people in the CCP (the world’s largest political party), and the largest group based on occupation in the Party is still farmers and workers (Xinhua 2013, 2016). We can see that there is still a vast popular base of support for the CCP in the PRC. Thus, our task for this chapter is to attempt to understand why the CCP continues to be so popular amongst the masses of people in China. In order to do this we must explore the revolutionary history of the Chinese Communist Party, particularly after 1949 when the CCP took power. While the likes of Dean (2016) and Ford (2016b) have theorized about “the Party” (i.e., a revolutionary communist party) in contexts where communist parties are not in power, and thus at their weakest, I attempt to theorize and understand a Communist Party that is powerful in the sense that it has taken state power and has a major and determining influence on the nature of a particular social formation.

As already stated in passing in chapter three, according to scholars such as Hart-Landsberg and Burkett (2005) the Chinese Communist Party supposedly had the ability to completely change the dominant mode of production in China by simply changing its official political economic outlook in 1978. Thus, in any analysis of China, the CCP, and the nature of a Communist Party in power *in general* has to be at the center of analysis, or at least a major part of a particular analysis. The last chapters showed how we should understand the Chinese Communist Party in relation to the global imperialist class bloc and as “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism” (Ford 2017). This chapter further explicates *why* we should critically analyze the Chinese Communist Party to showcase that it is still not a monolithic entity, and that the Party-line of the CCP can move back to its revolutionary political traditions in the post-Mao era. Since the CCP traditions are rooted in revolutionary communist theory, as long as the CCP exists and remains in control of the Chinese state apparatus socialism may remain “a possible option to which [China] can return if circumstances so demand” (Dirlik 1989, 377-378). This chapter argues that there continues to be a “line struggle” within the contemporary Chinese Communist Party that is similar to the struggles that were occurring within the CCP during Mao’s time (as was briefly discussed in chapter three). Thus, there continues to be meaningful debate within the CCP over the future of China that is similar to the ones that were occurring during Mao’s time. On the one side of the line struggle, the line that currently dominates the party, is the line of what Mao called the “capitalist roaders.” The current leaders – i.e., Mao’s “capitalist roaders” – of the contemporary CCP have a vulgar and teleological view of Marxism in which they argue China must deploy capitalist market mechanisms in order to develop China’s productive forces in an urban-centric manner. On the other side of the line struggle are party members who want to bring the CCP back to its historical revolutionary roots of collectivism,

social justice and socialism. This line within the contemporary CCP can not only be seen through the letter mentioned in chapter three, but also with Bo Xilai and the “Chongqing Model,” which will be explored below. As Lin (2013, 202-203) puts it: “Development in China is at the crossroads, facing on the one hand the legitimacy or inevitability of a complete capitalist transition and on the other the moral necessity as well as practical feasibility of a socialist alternative.”

This continued line struggle within the CCP, I argue suggests that one should continue to have faith in the Party (i.e., the CCP), as Mao would say. I will attempt to vindicate this two-fold argument by first exploring some of the ways some theorists have conceived of “the Party.”

Then, I will explicate the past and present line struggles within the Chinese Communist Party by exploring the struggle within the CCP between Mao and the “capitalist roaders,” and the more contemporary line struggle between the “Chongqing Model” and the “Guangdong Model.”

II. The Party

Before we dive into the historical intricacies of the CCP, we need to briefly explore how “the Party” has been conceptualized. Typically when someone thinks about theorizing the communist party, one thinks of the classical theorists such as Lenin who first theorized about the necessity of a vanguard revolutionary communist Party. Lenin proposed succinctly how the proletariat can break free from the dominant ideas within a particular social formation: “the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology...the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism...and trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie” (Lenin 1901/1975, 29). Hence, for Lenin the task for revolutionaries (the vanguard of the proletariat) is to “combat spontaneity” within the workers movement and bring the workers under the wing of the vanguard Party. In the process of workers becoming a part of the vanguard revolutionary Party

they become Gramsci's "organic intellectuals." When individuals within the proletarian class join a revolutionary organization they can get behind the mask of ideological interpretations and see scientifically what really is at work and the logics that create the conditions that they experience on a daily basis. And as Karl Kautsky (quoted in Lenin 1901/1975, 28) pointed out, in arguing against Economism and the Social-Democrats, socialist consciousness amongst the working class is not a direct result of the further development of capitalism and the class struggle that ensues within production:

Of course, socialism, as a doctrine, has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and, like the latter, emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia*...it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arose within it spontaneously.

Thus, true revolutionary, socialist, and proletarian consciousness must come from a group of vanguard revolutionaries that insert revolutionary consciousness into the proletariat.

As of late, theorizing about the Party that goes beyond traditional Leninist arguments for the need of revolutionary vanguard Party has been on the rise in academia (e.g., Dean 2012, 2016; Ford 2016a, 2016b). Jodi Dean (2012, 207) argues, "the party is a vehicle for maintaining

a specific gap of desire, the collective desire for collectivity.” The desire for collectivity is materialized in the crowd at a protest, which “offers an opening for politics by installing a gap in the order of things” (Ford 2016b, 6). The crowd creates the conditions and possibility (i.e., “the gap”) for “new political arrangements and production relations.” However, the “beautiful moment” of collectivity in the crowd is not really politics, rather “[p]olitics combines the opening with direction, with the insertion of the crowd disruption into a sequence or process that pushes one way rather than another” (Dean 2016, 125). Just because there are crowds of people at protests does not in anyway mean that revolutionary politics will emerge from them. Ford (2016b, 6) warns that “[w]ithout paying attention to the matter of organization and affirmative direction, the crowd...can be reabsorbed into the circuits of capitalist valorization, or worse, can work to strengthen the rule of capital.” In addition, what happens when people start going home from the protest and the crowd? The crowd wants to endure, but it cannot without the Party (Dean 2016; Ford 2016b). The Party keeps open the political gap produced by the crowd after people have gone home from the protest. Without the Party, when the crowd goes home the possibility for revolutionary change diminishes. With the Party, as it continues to plan, struggle, propagandize, and organize the possibility of “new political arrangements and production relations” remains. As Dean (2016, 215) states: “Everyone belonging to a crowd ‘carries within him a small traitor who wants to eat, drink make love and be left alone.’ When the crowd has a direction, when it is moving toward a goal, it can remain dense. Without its goal, the crowd disintegrates into individuals pursuing their own private ends.” The Party program provides the goal for the crowd.

The communist party provides an infrastructural form for political subjectivity as it works in “total solidarity with and support for all the oppressed and exploited within capitalist society”

(Lukacs 2009, 31 in Dean 2012). Most importantly, for Dean the Party is not “the prophet, director, or master. Instead of providing answers and directions, the Party is, more than anything else, a type of *affective infrastructure*,” that “reconfigures the crowd’s unconsciousness into a political form” (Ford 2016b, 8; Dean 2016, 217). Dean gives the example of a Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) meeting to showcase what she means by affective infrastructure. In Party meetings, even at the branch level, the meetings had great political and *affective* importance. Party meetings:

connected the local, the immediate, with world-historical events (think globally, act locally was communist practice long before it became an activist slogan). Unlike the moves to the personal and political that often disrupt political discussions in an individualist age, comrades drew strength from seeing themselves in a larger setting, from recognizing that rather than being unique they were typical, generic. The particular was a bog, a swampy morass that a group could get stuck in and out of which it would have to be pulled. Lessons could then be learned, conclusions drawn and plans made. Meetings broadened lives by opening them to the political, attaching them to movements and tendencies that took them out of miserable isolation. The world didn’t simply happen to them. They fought to shape the world (Dean 2016, 226).

Political struggle requires a great deal of breadth and depth of knowledge about a range of matters like history, political economy, and so forth. The Party provides “a body for a knowledge that exceeds what any one person can know” (Dean 2016: 26). For example, communist parties have always kept files of speeches so comrades in different geographic places with different degrees of “political knowledge” can obtain a speech created by another Party member and use it. This is just one of the aspects of the Party that makes real and genuine Party participation accessible to the broad masses of people.

From this brief showing, we see that these authors are bringing the Party back into theoretical formulations that attempt to theorize about how to change the world. However, these authors limit their theoretical work on the Party to where the Party is at its weakest and to parties that exist in places that have not experienced workers' revolutions; that is, Dean and Ford theorize the Party when it is not yet in power and in *control* of the workers' state.¹⁸ Dean (2016) uses concrete examples and experiences from the Communist Party USA and the Great Britain Communist Party to help theorize about the affective dimensions of the Party. Though this is nuanced, Mao and the Chinese experience show us however that when the Party leads a successful revolution and begins to control the new state apparatus that is built on top of the socialist economic foundation, matters become even more complex than organizing and leading a revolution. Though we live in non-revolutionary times, we still must examine the Party when it is in a position of power and explicate the problems it deals with. It is not enough to argue for the need of a vanguard party in organizing a revolution, because we know that the real struggle and problems occur the day after the revolution takes place when the Party has to reorganize a whole social formation, and deal with the contradictions amongst the people. It is of utmost importance that we theorize "the Party" when it is in a position of power because the contemporary broad grassroots left is weary and skeptical of the vanguard Party and vertical organization in general, as can be seen from the experience of the Occupy Wall Street movement (see Dean 2012). One of the major critiques of the Occupy Wall Street movement is that the movement put too much emphasis on "horizontal organizing," and thus the necessary leadership needed for organizing against the most organized class in human history (capital) never emerged. The Occupy movement attracted great attention as it spread across the United States. It brought to light the

¹⁸ I emphasize control because the Party and the state (and its apparatuses) are not necessarily the same thing and should not be conflated. Franz Schurmann (1971, 109-111) states: "The Party may lead the state, but it has its roots in society;" thus, the state and the Party are "linked but not identical."

inequalities that exist within neoliberal capitalism (and capitalism in general no matter what form it takes). However, the movement was not able to create any structural changes within the capitalist mode of production. It would have benefited greatly from a vanguard communist party that could have provided leadership. All decisions were made by consensus amongst all the Occupiers, so small minuscule decision-making took longer than necessary. There needs to be vertical decision making processes that can respond to the ebbs and flows of the struggle quickly and nimbly.

Since this skepticism exists, we then must theorize ways in which “the Party” can prevent itself from becoming bureaucratic to the degree that it is cancerous as occurred in the USSR. We must be able to show that such developments can be prevented; the Maoist notion of “the Party” helps us with this. How Mao saw the CCP’s role in Chinese society will be explored in more detail below.¹⁹ The Chinese Communist Party of course historically and presently provides “affective infrastructure” for Party members in China. The CCP provides avenues for new ways of understanding national and global political economic events, and deploys all of the other traditional aspects of a communist party.²⁰ However, we must go beyond this, and explore how a communist party, specifically the Chinese Communist Party, deals with problems that arise after the revolution, more specifically how the CCP has attempted to both historically and presently mediate the relationship between the Party, state bureaucracy, and the people. By doing this we will be able to examine the ongoing “two line struggle” within the CCP that is largely over how the Party relates with the masses.

¹⁹ Other Maoist formulations of the Party, such as the “mass-line” can be found in chapter three.

²⁰ For instance, Franz Schurmann (1971, 106) states: “People from Communist countries speak of the ‘the Party’ as if it had a life of its own, transcending the individuals in it. In many interviews with refugees from Mainland China, I asked them to specify whom they meant when they talked abstractly of the ‘Party.’ Most of them vigorously defended the abstract reality of the Party by pointing out that when problems arise in an organizational context, you ‘call the Party’ and not a specific individual. Different individuals may appear on call, not as person but as representatives of the Party. The Party has such clearly perceived functions that the differences of individual personality are submerged, just as with priests administering sacraments.”

III. The Chinese Communist Party in Power and the Two-Line Struggle

In his book *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, Franz Schurmann (1971, 105) asks: “The ultimate aim of all Communist parties, regardless of internal disputes over the means, is the seizure of state power. But what role does it play in society after that aim has been achieved?” All communists believe in the eventual withering away of the state, but the state cannot be abolished overnight as anarchists insist because that would allow counter-revolutionaries to organize and restore the old order, among other various reasons. Thus, a state apparatus – filled with bureaucrats – must be set up to deal with the great tasks of organizing society along a socialist basis. In a newly emergent socialist society there is a contradiction between the newly established bureaucracy and the masses. Bureaucracy “inevitably leads to alienation from the masses, unless a corrective is applied,” and for Mao, one way to get past this problem is to use the Party as an “instrument that forges the resolution of the contradiction between state and society in socialism” (Schurmann 1971, 112). The Party, instead of practicing “commandism” through state mandated policies, can reach down in society to unleash the energies of the masses and in doing so decreasing the use and need of formal state power for achieving economic and social development. However, as we will see, not all CCP members had these same populist and Maoist ideas.

Han Suyin (1978, 75-76) points out some of the practical problems of being in control of the state that faced the CCP immediately after Liberation in 1949:

In 1945 [the CCP] had 1.2 million members, toughened by austerity, revolutionary practice and armed struggle, by years in the rural bases, and by the great rectification movement led by Mao from 1941 to 1944.²¹ By September 1949 there were 4.5 million

²¹ See Han (1972) where Han Suyin lays out the great rectification campaign, or the Rectification Movement (1941-1944) in Yan’an. The Rectification Movement was the first mass ideological movement initiated by the Chinese Communist Party. The Party attacked intellectuals from the May Fourth Movement to create a new communist culture within the Party. The movement saw the consolidation of Mao’s paramount position within the CCP.

members, and 5.8 million by June 1950. The considerable accretion included raw, untried new members who had not been through the Yenan days, ignorant of Party history and even of Marxism-Leninism.

There was a great need for cadres (both Party and non-Party) to run administration apparatuses and government ministries; millions of people were required for this. Thus, many non-communists became bureaucrats within the new Chinese state apparatus out of necessity of just managing day-to-day things, and to rebuild China from decades of Civil War and centuries of imperialist intervention. The new Chinese government “inherited three million ex-Kuomintang employees,” and many people training to become government cadres came from landlord, and urban petty bourgeois families (Han 1978). A lot of the cadres within the new state bureaucracy that was created to manage the vast array of activities of the socialist state were not communists and came from relatively privileged positions in Chinese society. For Mao and the Maoists within the Party this was extremely problematic. As Han Suyin (1978, 79) put it:

If the dominant influence within the party was an elitist, feudal-minded intelligentsia selfishly bent on achieving its own supremacy, the revolution would fail. Lenin had seen this happen and denounced it in the USSR, and Mao saw it as a possibility, ever recurrent, in China’s young revolution.²²...Mao [Zedong] would do his best to stop the Chinese Communist Party from being turned into another Confucian, mandarin-like bureaucracy.

Class struggle within a socialist social formation does not just come to an end, especially a socialist social formation in its infancy. Thus, just as there is class struggle in the socialist social formation, this class struggle is “reflected within the Party, where it becomes an ideological contradiction between two ‘lines’ of political thinking” to the point that there is a “a permanent

²² See Bettelheim (1976) where he analyzes the class struggles that occurred within the Soviet Union immediately after the successful revolution in October of 1917. Here Bettelheim shows Lenin’s concern about the growing bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and its separation from the people.

‘two-way struggle,’ overt or covert, latent or erupting into open crisis, at all times within the Party” (Han 1978, 20). Mao showed that these “necessary and inevitable” struggles within the Party prevent the Party from becoming “ossified” and “decayed.” “Struggle guarantees its dynamism; progress can only come through ‘contradictions’ to be solved” (Han 1978, 21). The CCP progressed and maintained a revolutionary line through Mao’s notion of “unity, criticism, self-criticism, unity again” (Meisner 1999; Schram 1974). Once asked by Edgar Snow what he thought to be the most difficult and taxing thing in his life, Mao replied: “The intra-Party struggle” (Han 1978).

This two-line struggle, which was briefly explored in chapter three was between the more “orthodox Marxists” and the Maoists within the Party, the former was personified by Liu Shaoqi (who actually died as a consequence of the two line struggle within the Party during the Cultural Revolution) and the latter by Mao. Liu Shaoqi argued that “collectivization must wait for mechanization; that there must be capitalist exploitation to develop a proletariat before socialism could work;” that the economic base was not ready for socialism; and “that it is the ‘superstructure’ which is in advance and is socialist, whereas the productive forces are still backward” (Han 1978, 79). Thus, the agency of the workers and peasants, i.e., the class struggle, is, for the Liu line, not the motive force of revolutionary change. Rather, “it is ‘production’ and ‘the economic forces’ which achieve the goal of ‘socialism’” (Han 1978, 79). Consequently, Liu favored the more centralized top-down, urban based approach of economic planning similar to what the Soviets practiced. For Mao, who saw the consequences of the Soviet Union’s application of bureaucratic top-down methods, it was rather the “superstructure, still permeated with past modes of thought and behavior, traditions, customs, and attitudes, which obstructed the surge of the economic base” (Han 1978, 79).

Liu emphasized the need for the general societal division of labor between mental and manual labor to develop the productive forces, and only after the productive forces were developed to materially support socialism existed could the CCP begin to think about abolishing the societal division of labor. For the Liu-line doing so before the productive forces were ready was pure utopianism (Meisner 1982). Liu's notion of development included clear spatial and social implications of urban centered industrialization, which necessarily involves the exploitation of the countryside, the very countryside where the CCP came from and led the revolution from. On the other hand, the Mao-line "did not want the professional and technical elite to monopolize economic planning and management," and wanted the mass of Chinese peasants to take the primary role of organizing production, to be "expert" and "red" at the same time (Gao 2008, 113).

Mao and the Maoists within the Party – who were always in the minority numerically but because of Mao's direct connection with the masses were able to gain considerable amount of power – wanted the end goal of socialism and communism to be achieved through socialist and communist means. Mao put faith in the masses of Chinese people. He believed that with socialist "politics in command," the Chinese people themselves could develop the productive forces and thus create the material foundation for socialism (see Lotta 1994; Mao 1977). As Gao (2008, 113) put it:

Mao was not happy with China's copying the Soviet model of economic development in which everything was planned from the center. The Great Leap Forward was an attempt to find an alternative in which planning was not centralized in Beijing but locally... Clearly Mao wanted a decentralized model of development in which various levels of leadership and the broad masses of workers and farmers participated in the planning process of economic construction.

In *A Theory of Rural Construction*, Liang Shuming (1927) argued that the undeveloped peasant society of China will never be able to catch up with the more developed countries by simply copying and applying urban-centered industrialization, “whether by Western style competition or Soviet state power” (Liang 1927 in Lin 2013, 159). Thus, an alternative to the Soviet Model of economic development had to be developed, but through socialist and communist methods and means.

In *On the Ten Great Relationships*, Mao (1956) stressed the primacy of balance between heavy industry, light industry, and agriculture. Mao argued that accumulation with the agriculture sector could best be used to fund industrialization (Mao 1956 in Schram 1974). Mao called for:

decentralized industrial expansion in the rural settings – with small factories producing to supply local demands the countryside could be turned into an even more attractive place than the cities. In his vision, each commune could have its own farms, factories, nurseries, schools, hospitals, research institutions, shops, clubs, dining halls, and other service providers, and also transportation networks and militia... Agricultural laborers should be liberated from narrow divisions of labor, so will not forever stay who they are. At the same time, to reduce urban-rural disparities, urban students and professionals should periodically serve in the countryside; doctors and musicians are among Mao’s examples. Above all, bureaucrats at all levels need to be ‘re-educated’ by direct producers on the ground (Lin 2013, 164).

The Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) – though it had its problems due to things such as residual attachments to feudalism, technological deficiencies, the Sino-Soviet split, organizational deficiencies, and natural disasters (Ford 2016a; Solomon 1971) – was about the rapid development China’s productive forces through Maoist methods and means. Initiatives of the Great Leap such as creating “backyard furnaces” for steel production in the countryside by

peasants lessened the divide between town and country and taught the peasants how to produce steel, oil, etc., without ever becoming proletarianized. However, the shortcomings of the Great Leap Forward strengthened the Liu-line and allowed the more conservative elements within the CCP to gain power within the Party. Pre-Great Leap Forward practices were re-implemented, as Mao and the Maoists took a back seat for the time being (Schram 1974). The old ruling class within China was “emboldened by the production crisis of the Great Leap Forward” and the minimal capitalist reforms that were established immediately after the Great Leap Forward to jump-start the economy. The old ruling class in China, “[j]ust as every old ruling class does in an effort to survive within and resist a new dominant system, landowners, colonialist sympathizers, and pro-capitalist forces planted themselves in the [CCP] to promote their individual and class interests” (Ford 2016a, 101). To combat this Mao and the Maoists (the left-wing of the Party) initiated the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1966 to purge and eliminate bourgeois and sympathetic factions in the CCP. During this time many future leaders of the post-reform period were purged from the party, most notably Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang. It was “a revolution within a revolution,” where workers, peasants, and students “seized newspaper headquarters, occupied factories and government buildings, and created new communes (the most legendary of which was the Shanghai Commune)” (Ford 2016a, 101).

The two line struggle within the CCP between the Liu line (the capitalist road) and the Mao line (the socialist road) went on – with power shifting back and forth between the two lines until Mao’s death in 1976 and the subsequent arrest of party members closest to Mao, and the “Gang of Four.” By 1978 the previously purged Deng Xiaoping and the capitalist roaders were at the helm of the Party. Within four years China had a new constitution that legalized the free market on a wide scale. Special economic zones were created and global capital came flowing in

to exploit the cheap and educated Chinese workforce. There was an increased material basis for Party members to be corrupt, and later under Jiang Zemin the bourgeoisie – in the real physical sense, not just ideologically – began to enter the Party. In 2001 Jiang Zemin began to allow capitalists and the “progressive sections” of the bourgeoisie within China to enter the Party.

There are those who argue in the post-reform period that “the Chinese state system is characterized by a union between the Party and the government,” and this “statification” of the Party thus means that for a progressive movement to occur in China, and elsewhere, Party politics should be left in the 20th century (Wang 2016, 166). However, we have already seen that Heilmann and Perry (2011) and Arrighi (2007, 376) have shown that there are still cases where “mass line” initiatives occur through the “guerilla policy style” of the contemporary CCP. Lin (2013, 207) points out that though in the reform era “the party’s self-identification is now hardly distinguishable from that of the state,” because this process of the “statization” of the Party was result of “political work, it should not be irreversible.” Along these lines, Lin (2013, 209) argues: “committed socialists need to pick themselves up from setbacks and defeats, return to the battleground, and begin from the beginning,” and to create strategies that can “be devised to preserve the spaces and endeavors not yet dominated by private profit while regaining those already lost so as to reconstruct China’s political economy.” She adds: “Whether they can succeed will depend on the ‘line and cadres’ of the party drawing strengths from social resistance against further erosion of socialism.”

The post-reform CCP is not a monolithic entity, and there are times in which we can see a continuing inner struggle within the Party over the future of China.²³ The most important contemporary example of a “line struggle” within the contemporary CCP is shown through the

²³ See Fewsmith (2008) where he explicates the inner struggles in the CCP during the reform era. More specifically Fewsmith explores the inner struggles between the left and right factions in the Party from 1989 to 2008.

“Bo Xilai Saga” and the Chongqing Model (Zhao 2012). The recent struggle between two different economic and social models within China shows the differences within the Party that exists over the future of China. Though the Chongqing Model ceased to exist after the arrest of Chongqing Party leader Bo Xilai in 2012, many of the socialist and populist notions Bo was pushing in Chongqing have been incorporated by Xi Jinping since becoming President in 2012 (Zhao 2012). Thus, explicating the Chongqing Model still has relevance.

On the one hand there is what people in China call the “Guangdong Model” and on the other, the “Chongqing Model.” The Guangdong Model emphasizes more liberal political and economic policies than what the central government calls for. For example, Guangdong’s local government allows for more space for “civil society organizations” than is normally allowed in the PRC (Mulvad 2015). The “Guangdong Model” symbolizes a faction within the CCP that favors increased liberalization both economically and politically that could lead China into a more capitalist oriented future. On the other hand, we have the “Chongqing Model.” Lim (2014) calls the Chongqing Model a “counter-movement” that struggles against “the effects of an uneven spatiality that was instituted to drive and deepen the marketization of Chinese society.”

Rather than viewing Bo Xilai’s Chongqing Model as a “counter-movement,” I argue that we should view it as an example of the continued line struggle that exists within the CCP over the future of China, and thus provides hope for the possibility of changing the teleological and economic determinist line of the CCP. As already mentioned before, usually the wider public is not always privy to the inner struggles of a communist party due to the principles of democratic centralism in which all members, no matter their individual opinion, has to be disciplined and take the Party-line in public. Mao disliked this aspect of the Party at times and tried to make the Party more transparent through the mass-line, and by allowing open critique of the Party during

initiatives such as the Hundred Flowers Campaign. However, there are moments and events that occur which lay bare the inner struggles within the Party. This can be seen in instances such as the public denunciations of Liu Shaoqi during the Cultural Revolution, the Tiananmen Event of 1989, and most recently the arrest of Bo Xilai, Party Secretary of Chongqing. Rather than focusing on Bo's arrest which was over a cover up of the murder of an English businessman in Chongqing, we will instead focus on what Bo's "Chongqing Model" represented and how the model shows a potential for a Party-led revolutionary change in the PRC. To understand what the model truly represented, examining the Chongqing Model beyond the extracurricular activities of the murder and the individual politics involved is necessary. By doing this, we see that Bo "truly posed a challenge to the ideological legitimacy of the CCP central leadership and its succession plan. He threatened to split the CCP by exposing the profound contradictions of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics'" (Zhao 2012). However, as Zhao (2012) admits, Bo Xilai is no Mao Zedong.

Bo Xilai, in establishing the "Chongqing model" in Sichuan Province, began to restore the Maoist notion of the "mass line" more explicitly and began to deploy more socialist policies. During Bo's leadership in Chongqing, "Bo and his followers tried in particular to restore the spirit of a lost collectivism and ties between the leaders and the led...the officials in Chongqing were compelled to spend no less than two-thirds of their working hours in the fields with front-line workers, villagers, marginalized groups, and poor households" (Lin 2013, 201). The main component of the model included an enlarged public sector and an increased emphasis on social welfare. Bo Xilai argued that the CCP could not "wait for too long before dealing with the problem of social polarization, because then vested interests would be too powerful and it would be no longer possible to make any change" (Zhao 2012). Thus, Chongqing, in a Maoist-like

manner, began to work on bridging the urban-rural gap by allowing 3.22 million rural immigrants to settle in the city with “urban citizenship entitlements in employment, retirement pensions, public rental housing, children’s education, and healthcare...Chongqing spent more than half of all government expenditures on improving public welfare, particularly the livelihoods of workers and farmers” (Zhao 2012). In contrast to the “Guangdong Model,” which continued to focus development around GDP growth, Chongqing under the leadership of Bo made extensive efforts to create a more socially sustainable developmental path.

In addition to creating more egalitarian economic policies in Chongqing, Bo de-commercialized Chongqing’s nationally available television channel CQTV. As Zhao (2012) points out:

Like all of China’s provincial satellite television channels, CQTV had previously relied heavily on advertising revenue and was excessively commercial in programming orientation. By stopping commercial advertising at CQTV and financing it with a combination of government revenue and internal cross-subsidy within the Chongqing broadcasting authority (which runs other commercialized channels), Bo’s Chongqing leadership aimed to turn CQTV into a “public interest channel” and a key venue for the promotion of cultural citizenship. The decommercialized CQTV rebranded itself with the color “red” and offered a program line-up that included red-song singing performances, revolutionary story-telling, recollections of revolutionary histories, the cultivation of revolutionary faith, and revolutionary literature.

In addition to de-commercializing the Chongqing national television channel, the cultural component of the “Chongqing Model” consisted of a “Singing Red” campaign. Launched in 2008, the campaign emphasized the singing of red songs, reading revolutionary classics, telling revolutionary and uplifting stories, etc. In June of 2011 a massive Chongqing cultural troupe, led by Bo, travelled to Beijing and performed seven Singing Red performances for the 90th

anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. During the celebrations there were many Party members defending the CCP's socialist legacy at that time in Beijing, which displayed a rift within the Party (Zhao 2012).

Despite the subsequent arrest of Bo, which marked the end of the "Chongqing Model" in 2012, it is clear that

the class realities and political struggles that have intercut this entire saga will remain key features of China's unfolding history. Instead of tarnishing and even burying the cause of socialism once more in China, the ending of the Bo saga may open up other new avenues to the Chinese struggle for socialism, for which popular control of the Chinese political economy will be a defining feature (Zhao 2012).

If Bo had been able to get into the Standing Committee of the CCP Politburo, which he was trying to do, it would have marked an historic setback for the bourgeoisie that have entered the Party, and a huge advance for socialism in China.

This explication of the "Chongqing Model" is not meant to act as an uncritical appraisal of it, because it had many problems particularly as it tried to work within the existing Party line of "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," and within a particular logic of development and modernization. But this explication has shown the importance of continued rifts within the Party and of different "lines" within the Party. Mao once said that the most difficult thing in life was the inner Party struggle. If the real socialists and communists within the CCP are able to take power back of the CCP through protracted struggle, the Party can once again act as an agent for revolutionary change and truly act on behalf of the workers and peasants in not just China, but the world.

This chapter has dealt with the internal dynamics of the CCP that affected the "line struggle." However, when a Party takes control of a state apparatus in the era of imperialism it has to deal with outside forces as well, which inevitably helps shape how the "line struggle" is

played out within the Party. Acknowledging outside forces from the global imperialist class camp is of utmost importance in a global class war analysis. Though there are many examples of such external pressures from the capitalist camp that affected relations within the CCP, an example I want to focus on is the period when China was attempting to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the late 1990s and finally when China was admitted in 2001. China joining the WTO required certain conditions that China had to meet: “China’s laws, trade policies, and domestic regulation of doing business would have to change dramatically” (Prime 2002: 27). The rationale for joining the WTO for China was to increase trade with global capital and thus further developing the productive forces. However, because China had to let down more barriers to global capital in order to join the WTO, the “capitalist roaders” within the Party became stronger. It is no accident that when China joined the WTO in 2001 that in the same year Chinese capitalists began to enter the CCP.

IV. Conclusion

The base and majority of the contemporary CCP *still* consists of peasants, workers and petty producers. As Mao (1972, 3) said: “We must have faith in the masses and we must have faith in the Party. These are two cardinal principles. If we doubt these principles, we shall accomplish nothing.” The Chinese Communist Party has played a key role in creating and maintaining China’s sovereignty in the reform era. Not only did the Party develop the policies during the Maoist era that created the material foundation for the reforms to take off at the pace that they did, the Party also managed the complex reform in an unprecedented way. Other communist parties in the Soviet bloc fell as result of market reforms and through making continued concessions to the West, and the CCP studied these experiences closely, and prevented a total collapse of their socialist system (Yu 2005). And when the intensified class and

ideological contradictions began to come to a peak in 1989—which were a direct consequence of the market reforms themselves—the Chinese Communist Party displayed a great deal of “restraint” in dealing with the counterrevolutionaries in Tiananmen. We can only hope the Party sends out the tanks when the counterrevolutionaries assemble again to prevent a counterrevolution as it did in Tiananmen (see Ford 2016a).

This chapter has argued that the post-reform Chinese Communist Party is not a monolithic entity and that this can be seen through the continued “line” struggles within the Party. This was shown through the contemporary explication of the differences between the “Chongqing Model” and the “Guangdong Model,” which represented two drastically different visions of where the People’s Republic of China should go in general. This chapter has also argued that because the CCP has such a determining influence on the nature of the Chinese social formation, analyzing the line struggles in the Party can help decipher where China’s future is going. By exploring the contemporary struggles within the Party we have seen that the forces socialism and communism are far from dead in China and that these forces can be found *within* the Party.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

“It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society will remain in our country for a long time to come, and so will their class ideology. If this is not sufficiently understood, or is not understood at all, the gravest mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging the struggle in the ideological field will be ignored” –Mao Zedong, 1957

I. Overview

The goal of this thesis was to simply provide a new understanding of Communist China in general and post-reform China more specifically. To do this I first researched the different geographic formulations that have been applied to understand China from George Cressey’s time to the present. I have also researched the different perspectives within the broader social sciences and humanities that scholars have deployed to understand post-reform China within the confines of the Anglophone tradition. Through these different perspectives, I attempted to synthesize these various perspectives to provide the theoretical and political justification for applying the global class war framework to analyze post-reform China. My thesis boils down to two main arguments. The first is that China is best understood and interpreted through the global class war theoretical framework. The global class war framework was developed outside academia by communist theoretician, Sam Marcy from Buffalo, New York. The global class war sees the world as basically being divided into two primary global class camps. As I quoted in chapter four, Ford (2017, 44) best explicates these two primary global class camps:

on the one side is the imperialist camp, those states and forces of capital expansion and dispossession. On the other side is the proletarian class camp, which includes the states and forces of the exploited, dispossessed, and oppressed. In this camp are the socialist states, the states that have waged successful anti colonial struggles, the oppressed within colonized nations, and the exploited within the imperialist nations.

Through this framework, one can see that a victory for one agent within their camp benefits the global class camp in general. Understanding and interpreting post-reform China in this fashion is of utmost importance both theoretically and politically. This will be elaborated upon below.

Instead of seeing post-reform China as “neoliberal albeit with Chinese characteristics” (Harvey 2005), understanding post-reform China through the global class war perspective helps us see that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People’s Republic of China in general are agents in global political economic space that “actually resists neoliberalism” (Ford 2017), rather than “imperialist,” “capitalist,” or “neoliberal.”

The second argument made is that we should pay particular attention to the Party (i.e., the Chinese Communist Party) in analyzing China historically and presently because of the role it plays in determining the nature of China’s social formation. Hart-Landsberg and Burkett (2004) argue that capitalism has been “completely restored” in China since 1978 when China opened up. In 1978, the CCP officially changed its Party line to “Socialism with Chinese characteristics,” which theoretically justified the introduction of foreign capital and the development of capitalism in China to rapidly develop the productive forces and thus create the material foundation for socialism. Thus, it is apparent that the Party (i.e., the CCP) plays a determining role on the nature of the Chinese social formation, and depending on which “line” politically dominates the Party determines and shapes the nature of China’s social formation (Han 1976; Hinton 1972). This “line struggle” has been occurring since 1949 when the PRC was first established. The CCP inherited an underdeveloped peasant social formation, and one of their first priorities after Liberation in 1949 was to develop the productive forces to not only create socialism, but to improve the living standards of the millions upon millions of Chinese people. There were competing factions, or lines, within the Party as to how to best to do this. During

Mao's time as China's "paramount leader" (1949-1976), on one side of the line struggle were the Maoists within the Party, personified by Mao himself, representing the line of socialism, communism, and revolution. The Maoists wanted to achieve socialism and communism through socialist and communist means. On the other side of the line struggle are the likes of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping who personified and represented what the Maoists called the "capitalist roaders." The Maoists called them "capitalist roaders" because they wanted to take the capitalist road to socialism. Liu, Deng, and many others within the CCP believed teleologically that China had to first go through a period of capitalist development to some degree in order to develop China's productive forces before they could think of creating and having socialism. Because of Mao's direct connection with the Chinese masses, he could bypass the Party and state bureaucracy to ensure that the capitalist roaders within the Party could not be the dominant force in the Party, and thus in the Chinese social formation in general. Mao did this by initiating things like the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. By bypassing the state and Party bureaucracy, Mao was able to uphold the revolutionary line within the CCP, and the CCP was able to help create the conditions for socialism to develop from 1949 to 1976. As discussed in chapter four, socialism and a socialist state can be defined as consisting of characteristics such as: public ownership of the means of production, central economic planning, and government monopoly on foreign trade (See Party for Socialism and Liberation 2015).

After the death of Mao in 1976, the capitalist roaders were able to take control of the Party and win the "line struggle." Under Deng Xiaoping the Party changed the state and Party constitution to represent the new dominant theoretical foundation of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics," which emphasized economic development over egalitarianism and developing socialist consciousness amongst the masses. In other words, after 1978 the CCP focused on the

economic base rather than the superstructure. The “opening up” of China to global capital came about through a struggle within the Party. After Mao died, his supporters and the Gang of Four (including his wife Jiang Qing) were either purged from the Party or arrested. Thus, because reform and opening up was a political decision it can change if conditions permit or demand. Many in the New Left, such as Wang Hui (2016), argue that the contemporary CCP has become “statified,” and thus is not a viable agent to change the exploitative relations that have developed in China since its reform and opening up. However, in chapter five, I argued that there still exists a “line” struggle within the CCP, and that the contemporary CCP is not a monolithic entity. There are still socialists and communists in the CCP who adhere to the four primary characteristics of socialism mentioned above and they are struggling within the Party to change the Party’s developmental methods and policies. This can be seen in the letter written by a group of Party members mentioned in chapter three and the continued line struggle that exists in the CCP. Thus, as Mao would say, we should still have faith in the Party to end capitalist exploitation in the PRC and to develop socialism and communism once again.

I showed this contemporary line struggle within the CCP by comparing the more liberal and capitalist Guangdong Model and the more state-centered and socialist Chongqing Model led by Bo Xilai. The Chongqing Model redeveloped “Red Culture” through initiatives such as the “Singing Red” campaign and decommercializing the national news station in Chongqing. The main aspect of the Chongqing Model entailed an enlarged public sector and an increased emphasis on social welfare. The development of the Bo’s Chongqing Model represented a rift within the Party over the future direction of China. The Chongqing Model – though it still functioned within the developmental logics of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” – shows

us that the ideals and goals of socialism and communism is far from dead in China and in the CCP.

Though this thesis has focused on the class struggles (i.e., “line struggles”) that have occurred within the CCP throughout the history of the Party it is of utmost importance to acknowledge the immense existence of material class struggles and worker protest that have been on the rise in China since the late 1990s in response to the reforms and massive privatizations (Friedman and Lee 2010). These material class struggles that occur outside the confines of the Party play a key role in creating the material foundation for the line struggles that occur within the Party. Without the continuous and increasing worker unrest that is currently occurring in China the Bo Xilai faction within the CCP would not have the political justification for their critique of the reform period. Thus, a more complete analysis of the class struggles that occur within the Party must take in account seriously the material class struggles that occur outside the Party.

II. Significance and Contributions

There are on-going debates on whether China can be considered “functionally” capitalist (Arrighi 2007; Meyer 2011). Other debates ask whether China should be looked upon in a positive way because it acts as a defensive wall against Western capital (Silver and Arrighi, 2000), or strongly criticized for establishing a complete and unforgiving “capitalist restoration” (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett, 2004: 9). As Peck and Zhang (2013, 358) argue: “[t]he meaning of the Chinese ‘model’ often lies in the eye of the beholder.” From the different studies explored in this project it seems that the definition and classification of China’s society is based on one’s *interpretation* and epistemological position i.e., it is based and rooted in one’s ideological-political position. Thus, this project simply attempted to provide a more sufficient understanding

of post-reform China in global political economic space. The global class war perspective can best understand the historical and contemporary forces that shape the nature of the PRC. How one views China theoretically has major implications and consequences politically. Classifying China as “neoliberal” is problematic because progressive and revolutionary peoples in the west will be less willing to question Western imperialist intervention in China. If popular Marxists like David Harvey, who people outside of academia look to and read to gain insights on particular matters, claims that China is “neoliberal,” it has detrimental effects to the anti-imperialist movement.

By using the global class war perspective to analyze the contemporary PRC in the current era of imperialism, we see that post-reform China is simply a country attempting to finally rise and develop within a global political economic system that is dominated by the global imperialist class camp and their “international” political and economic institutions, and the logics of global capital. One may correctly point out that China’s opening up to global capitalism in 1978 provided global capital a vast space to temporarily solve its crisis of overaccumulation of the late 1960s and 1970s, and thus post-reform China should instead be seen as an actor that stabilizes the global capitalist system. However, I argued in chapter four that China is rising and developing in a fashion that offers a “model” and an alternative for other developing countries that are attempting to develop their economies by integrating into the global capitalist system. The so-called Chinese “model” offers an alternative to Western dominated developmental methods and to the dictates of IMF and the World Bank’s conditional loans. I argued in chapter four that even as China begins to invest and export capital out to other countries, it does so in a fashion that is *qualitatively* different than the IMF and the World Bank due to China’s historical communist values. Thus, China’s rise *within* the global capitalist system challenges Western

economic and political hegemony in the global economy in general, and in particular neoliberal capitalism. China, and more specifically the Chinese Communist Party, represent “actually existing resistance to neoliberalism.” To show this, I explored the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The AIIB has similar goals and functions as the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Developmental Bank (ADB), but the AIIB is actually controlled by an Asian country while the WB and ADB are Western controlled. The AIIB was setup by China to help developing countries finance large infrastructural projects and to offer an alternative to the conditional loans given by the WB and the ADB which the IMF enforces through structural adjustment policies. Developing countries are forced to adhere to the structural adjustment orders to continue to receive loans to fund large developmental projects. The AIIB, on the other hand, has a policy of “no strings attached,” to its loans. China owns a large amount of US debt so it has to find avenues to invest it. The AIIB enables China to invest surplus capital in other regions throughout Asia and the world, particularly in Africa (see Lim 2010). However, just because China is investing in other regions besides its own country, does not mean it qualifies itself as imperialist. It is important to reemphasize Brian Becker and Eugene Puryear’s (2015) argument (that I quoted in chapter four) to remind us that we cannot call China “imperialist” or “capitalist” just because China invests money in other countries:

it hardly is of any analytical service to deem “imperialist” every country that exports capital, or attempts to expand its access to natural resources (an inevitable feature of any society based on the growth of productive forces and population). To call every country with these features ‘imperialist’ would encompass so many states, that it would blur the lines between their relative power. It would make it impossible to understand their position in the world order. From [a global class war] perspective, we use the terminology of “imperialist” to describe those states that are dominating and seeking to

dominate that global system—not those who are trying to finally rise within it (Becker and Puryear 2015, 63).

Peck and Zhang (2013, 370-380) argue that it would be a theoretical mistake to classify the PRC as either “socialist” or “capitalist” because China *combines* contradictory forms of socialism and capitalism. However, I argued in chapter four that it is of utmost importance to classify which mode of production *dominates* within a social formation because of its political implications. As Althusser (2014) and Bettelheim (1975) argue, within any given social formation there are always several modes of production at work at once, but one *dominates*.

To help show my argument that the socialist foundation is *still* dominant in contemporary China I explored how the Chinese state dealt with the 2007-2008 global economic crisis. The way China’s government dealt with the 2008 crisis was drastically different than how Western capitalist governments dealt with the economic crisis. When the 2007-2008 crisis hit the United States it affected the Chinese economy immensely because Chinese manufacturers rely heavily upon the export of goods for US consumption. Lardy (2012) states that in 2009 when GDP expansion in China was at its lowest in almost a decade, consumption grew, wages and income went up, and the government created enough jobs to deal with the massive layoffs that occurred due to the global economic crisis. How could China have such a different experience of the 2007-2008 crisis than capitalist countries where they still face unemployment, austerity, recession, and where the big banks that created the conditions for the crisis in the first place were bailed out, while the working class people were evicted from their homes were largely left to fend for themselves? Goldstein (2013) argues that China was able to deal with the economic crisis differently than capitalist countries because of national planning, state-owned enterprises, state-owned banking “and the policy decisions of the Chinese Communist Party.” These

institutions continue to exist because they are the “remaining structures of Chinese socialism.” By examining how the Chinese state dealt with the 2007-2008 economic crisis I was able to argue that the socialist foundation in China’s social formation is still dominant over capitalism.

The future of China remains very much in the open as it always has. Its future was open when the Chinese Communist Party first took over the Chinese state apparatus in 1949. There was no guarantee that the Party would take the socialist path from 1949 to 1976, it was decided by struggles within the Party and state. Therefore a focus on struggles that occur within the Chinese state is *still* important. However, one may argue that it is possible that China is too far enough down the capitalist road in the reform era that it is highly constrained in its ability to return to socialist/communist means of development and its ability to avoid the kind of imperialist practices that have shaped the actions of other powerful capitalistic states. For instance, one could say that since China is investing and extracting surplus-value in other countries that it is only a matter of time before it begins to act as an imperialist power on at least a regional scale. This is cynical and theoretically wrong from a global class war perspective. Given China’s recent history as a colony and being divided under “spheres of influence” of the different imperialist powers, the development of the kind of imperialist practices (e.g., structural adjustment programs) performed by the capitalistic countries by China seems far-fetched. The people of China know what it is like to be a colony. Additionally, the PRC has a history of revolutionary internationalism that no other western capitalistic country has a history of (e.g., supporting the Black Panthers). Going along these lines, there is also hope that China can return to socialist and communist means of development because of China’s great revolutionary communist history. It is of recent memory in the minds of *the people* of China of the Maoist

methods of social and economic development. Since this communist and revolutionary historical foundation exists in China, *there is hope*.

This thesis is far from an uncritical appraisal of the CCP and post-reform China. One can and must critique the developmental logics of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics,” and the exploitative conditions that have come out of it, the relationship between the CCP and the masses, how Chinese firms deal with people from places like Africa, and so on. However, one must always keep the global class war in mind when doing so because if one does not one can all too easily fall in line with the global imperialist class camp.

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Collin L. Chambers

cchamber@syr.edu

315.885.8209

Education

M.A. in Geography (expected June 2017)

Thesis: “The People’s Republic of China and the Global Class War”

Advisor: Don Mitchell

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

B.A., *summa cum laude*, in Geography (May 2015)

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.

A.A., in Humanities & Social Science (May 2013)

Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY.

Experience

Publications

Chambers, Collin. forthcoming (expected 2017). “Political Engagement.” In *Brills’ Encyclopedia of Global Pentecostalism*, edited by Stanley Burgess, Elaine Cleeton, and Todd Johnson. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.

Presentations

Chambers, Collin. 2017. *Post-Reform China and the Global Class War*. Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Conference 2017. Boston, Mass.

Chambers, Collin. 2015. *In Defense of the Chinese Communist Party: oil, self-determination, global class war, and the neoliberal myth*. Paper presented at Critical Theories in the 21st Century: A Conference of Transformative Pedagogies. West Chester University, PA.

Teaching Experience

Substitute Teacher – Syracuse City Schools. April 2017 to present.

Teaching Assistant – Geography 273: Political Economy, Spring 2017.

Teaching Assistant – Geography 103: Environment and Society, Fall 2016.

Other Experience

Maxwell Dean’s Assistant – Assistant to the Editor of Maxwell’s Publications Manager
2015—2016

Awards/Honors

Gamma Theta Upsilon International Honor Society in Geography
George B. Cressey Award for service to the Syracuse University Community, 2015
Liberal Arts & Sciences: Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum Honor Award, 2013

Service

Service to the Community

Coordinator, Syracuse ANSWER Coalition 2011—Present

Professional Affiliations

The Association of American Geographers