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UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

INSTITUTE OF CHINA STUDIES

马来亚大学中国研究所

ISSN 2180-3250

9 772180 325006

International Journal of China Studies

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International Journal of China Studies

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    First published in 2015

Typeset by Ivan Foo Ah Hiang

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Contents

Research Articles

Chinese Support for Communist Insurgencies in Southeast Asia during the Cold War[+]

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Abstract

After 1949, the PRC was eager to support ideologically related movements in Asia as part of its general strategy to lead global class war. Southeast Asia was chosen as a centre of PRC's revolutionary activities because of its strategic location, geographical proximity, lesser presence of major powers, and still weak colonial or newly independent governments. From China's opening to America in 1972 and with a general shift to more accommodating foreign policy under Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, the support for communist insurgencies was significantly scaled down by the CCP. The PRC's role in the insurgencies should be seen as a result of shifting Chinese foreign policy preferences. Insurgency support was a tool used to cement China's international status among the socialist countries as well as to weaken non-communist regimes, alongside the superpowers backing them. In periods of more revisionist foreign policy, one of the key influences upon decision making was Mao's idea of revolution and mass mobilisation. Since the opening to non-communist countries and Deng's rise to power, communist insurgencies became more of an embarrassment to the CCP.

Keywords: *Chinese foreign policy, Cold War, communist insurgency, Southeast Asia*

1. Introduction

In the early period of the Cold War, Southeast Asia was in a state of political and social disorder. Returning colonial powers had problems to retain the control of their former colonial possessions and newly independent countries in the region were struggling with many internal difficulties. The power vacuum in Southeast Asia of the late 1940s was thus conducive for various interventions of great powers, including support for communist insurgencies. Soon after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in

October 1949, the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) became the centre of a revolutionary struggle in Asia by providing ideological, economic and military support to various communist parties across Asia. Despite lack of sufficient contacts between the CCP and other Asian communist parties prior 1949 (except Indochina), Beijing quickly became the hub of revolutionary activity in this part of the world. As one of the key communist countries, China was eager to support ideologically related movements in Asia as part of its general strategy to lead global class war, where poor countries of the Third World would become the leading force for overthrowing colonial and capitalist forces. Southeast Asia was chosen as a centre of PRC's revolutionary activities because of its strategic location, geographical proximity, lesser presence of major powers, and still have weak colonial or newly independent governments. However, from China's opening to America in 1972 and with a general shift to more accommodating foreign policy under Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) in the late 1970s, the support for communist insurgencies was widely scaled down by the CCP.

In this paper, I will explore the motifs behind Chinese foreign policy in relation to PRC's support of communist insurgency and anti-government movements across Southeast Asia during 1949-1989. Was it caused by strongly ideological nature of Chinese foreign policy, or was it the result of China's search for security in unstable Cold War Asia environment? Or was it the result of both? Using the liberal theory of international politics, this paper argues that the PRC's role in the insurgencies should be seen as the consequence of shifts in Chinese foreign policy preferences. Until the 1970s the PRC understood *revolutionary* communist ideology as one of the main components of a state's identity. Insurgency support was a tool used to cement China's international status among the socialist countries as well as to weaken non-communist regimes, together with the superpowers backing them (the USA in the 1950s, both the USSR and the USA in the 1960s and the USSR in the 1970s and 1980s). Both military and ideological rivalry between the two superpowers was seen crucial by Chinese leaders, and their support for communist insurgencies followed larger international strategy. Since the opening to non-communist countries and Deng's rise to power, communist insurgencies became more of an embarrassment to the CCP. The reason was not the abandonment of ideology, but rather it took a new form, with presenting new goals as well as new enemies (Vietnam and the USSR instead of the USA, see He 1994).

First part of this paper will describe the liberal theory of international politics. Second part will show overall trends in the development of Chinese foreign policy since 1949 until the end of the Cold War. The third part then deals with the characteristic of the post-Second World War Southeast Asia and its relations with communist China. Finally, part four will go in more detail

through some cases of the PRC support of communist insurgencies in two countries (Thailand, Burma) in the region.

2. Method

To answer the question why China has supported various anti-government movements in Asia, I will first present my own analytical framework. Every attempt to explain foreign policy behaviour of a certain state could be theoretically understood by (a) systemic constraints on rational actors' behaviour and distribution of material capabilities, or (b) preferences generated by domestic politics. Structural realism and liberal institutionalism can be counted as cases of (a). Both theories see states as unitary actors pursuing security and other goals with fixed preferences in an anarchic international system. Theories falling under (b) were for a long time out of favour in international theory mainstream. Indeed, one of the highlights of realism has been the idea that those who give primacy to domestic politics are "reductionists", those who reduce the inevitable power relations of international politics to ad hoc domestic factors (Waltz, 1979: 29; see Zakaria 1992). It is therefore ironic that most of the realist writings in the past 30 years attempted to incorporate various domestic variables to explain state behaviour deviating from structural realist predictions and rationality (see Legro and Moravcsik, 1999; Vasquez, 1997; Rose, 1998; Walt, 1998). This is especially the case with explanations relating to events during the Cold War, when foreign policy decisions were influenced by strategic as well as ideological reasons. Describing states as unitary actors in an anarchic system interested in security and relying only on themselves does not provide us with enough explanatory power. For example, the reason why certain states are seen as allies or enemies, and which phenomena are deemed as threatening, cannot be inferred from the distribution of military and economic power. Another issue is that the capacities and their potential use in foreign policy are dependent on domestic political situation and the configuration of political institutions. It is not simply enough to suppose that a particular state can mobilise its resources at will, because those resources have to be "extracted" from society, and that usually involves incentives or coercion (for this argument see Zakaria, 1999). Focusing solely on the issue of state capabilities has also the disadvantage of treating states usage of its capacities as an easy and potentially automatic task (Moravcsik, 1997: 524).

To answer the research questions raised in this paper, I therefore adopt the liberal theory of international relations as developed by Andrew Moravcsik (1997, 2002, 2008). The liberal theory of foreign policy agrees with realists that primary actors in international politics are states (having monopoly on coercive power) interacting in an anarchic international environment. Unlike

the neo-realist theory, which must assume fixed and conflicting preferences, the liberal theory holds that state preferences are generated by domestic politics and therefore susceptible to change (Moravcsik and Legro, 1999: 13-16). For neo-realism, state behaviour is influenced by variations in state material capabilities, which are more important than differences in domestic preferences among states. In liberal theory, on the other hand, variation in preferences is the key independent variable. Thus, according to Moravcsik, most contemporary international relations theories lack coherent theory of the state. As explained above, seeing the state as unitary is too simplistic and does not provide us with enough explanatory power. He writes that "in the liberal conception of domestic politics, the state is not an actor, but a representative institution subject to capture and recapture, construction, and reconstruction by coalition of social actors" (Moravcsik, 1997: 518; see also Keohane, 1990: 174; Stein, 1982).

In Moravcsik's view there are three main types of liberalism: "*Ideational* liberal theories link state behaviour to varied conceptions of desirable forms of cultural, political, socioeconomic order. *Commercial* liberal theories stress economic interdependence (…) *Republican* liberal theories stress the role of domestic representative institutions, elites and leadership dynamics and executive-legislative relations" (Moravcsik, 2008: 234-235). It is mainly the first type that is the most illuminating for foreign policy during the Cold War, because it could be described as a "clash of social systems", when both superpowers compete to spread ideas and influence in the Third World. "But in fact the competitive logic of international politics does *not* lead to this solution. The most prominent IR theory, Waltz's neorealism, argues that because the superpowers were so much stronger than everyone else and able to balance against the adversary by mobilizing internal resources, they did not pay much attention to the Third World" (Jervis, 2012: 33). Various states pursued strategies seemingly inconsistent with their ideological goals, but their most basic foreign political distinction was to discern which state is the enemy and which one is not was heavily influenced by ideological beliefs.

Moravcsik's version of liberal theory is not just another variant of the statement that domestic politics simply determines foreign policy behaviour. In his view, liberal theory is also systemic, because state preferences in the international system are interdependent (Moravcsik, 1997: 524-527). Liberal theory is not reductionist, because foreign policy of a particular state depends on its preferences taken together with the preferences of other actors. The configuration of preferences in the international system is the key structural determinant of foreign policy behaviour (Moravcsik, 2001: 6-9). For example, liberal theory does not try to explain foreign policy of China by looking only at Chinese preferences, but takes into account preferences of others. Unlike neo-realism, liberal theory does not hold these preferences as

constantly conflicting or convergent (Moravcsik, 1997: 520). It is also crucial to differentiate between strategies and preferences. Preferences deal with ends, strategies with means to achieve those ends (goals). It is not surprising for liberal theory if states compromise its welfare or sometimes security, because this could be explained by shifting state preferences (Moravcsik, 1997: 520). Furthermore, liberal theory also covers the behaviour of non-liberal states. It is consistent with states such as the early PRC, where foreign policy was under control of a handful of actors, predominantly in the person of Mao Zedong (see Moravcsik, 1997: 518).[1]

In the liberal model of Chinese foreign policy-making, the PRC's preferences were international propagation of international communist revolution, securing that China's neighbours are comprised of friendly regimes and strengthening communist rule over China. In the case of the first decades of the PRC, foreign policy guidelines and strategic decisions were made by a handful of top CPC leadership, mainly Mao Zedong. However, even Mao needed support of the Party and larger social forces and he needed to mobilise these in order to fulfil his goals in domestic and foreign policy. In most cases, Chinese leadership exploited the periods of international tensions for gains in domestic legitimacy and prestige.[2] Returning to our main question, the PRC's support for particular communist movements abroad in their fight against its own government was a result of converging of ideological and security preferences. The divergence occurred only in some cases and when it did, the result was either radicalisation of foreign policy or more accommodative posture towards non-communist states. The support for rebel groups varied according to the "usefulness" of a particular insurgency for satisfying China's preferences in foreign policy. In times of radicalisation of Chinese foreign policy (such as during the Cultural Revolution), ideological factors prevailed with heavy costs for China's prestige abroad as well as national security interests. Furthermore, material support was granted by Chinese leadership only when it was logistically feasible (Thailand, Vietnam, Burma). Otherwise their actual willingness to provide anything beyond moral and ideological guidelines was low. When China changed its posture in 1970s, economic modernisation and peaceful international environment were seen as a better way to achieve Chinese goals. This should not be interpreted as complete abandonment of communist ideology in favour of some kind of unrestrained one-party state capitalism, but the communist ideology itself was to a large extent imbued with different meaning. The USSR took the place of the USA as the principal enemy of the PRC and even the late Mao himself was slowly changing his preferences from further domestic political radicalisation to defending China's revolutionary achievements (see Jian, 2010: 239-245).

Therefore, the role of ideology and security interests in PRC's foreign behaviour was not mutually exclusive (Hunt, 1995/96: 131-134; Christiansen

and Rai, 2013: 164-167). We cannot use simple dichotomy of national interests and the ideological interests while explaining behaviour of states in the international system (see Jervis 2012). Ideology, domestic and international goals were connected and played important roles in guiding Chinese foreign policy. Mao and his comrades wanted to transform Chinese state and society and thus improve China's status in international society (Jian, 2010: 7-8). Following Young Deng, by status I understand "(…) the state's concerns over its material wellbeing and international treatment with the goal to engineer mutually reinforcing growth in both" (Deng, 2008: 2). China's support for revolutionary communist movements in Southeast Asia was therefore a function of the PRC's willingness and preference to be a *status quo* or revisionist (revolutionary) power in international society. On the other hand, international politics served the communist elites as means to mobilise domestic support. Thus, for Mao, revolutionary foreign policy was conducted when there was a sense of international weakness or leadership split in the PRC (Jian, 2010: 11-12). That radicalisation tends to happen in times of insecurity and is further illuminated by the fact that in the Cold War era the PRC resorted to use force in bilateral disputes when its sense of insecurity was especially high (see Fravel, 2007/8).

We can concur with the realist scholars that the reasons behind the PRC's decision to support friendly political movements in Southeast Asia or attempts to install them to power, was a search for security, but this cannot be the only explanation. China's sense for security was itself formed by domestic and international environment.[3] In order to see these points in more detail I am now going to turn to a basic outline of PRC foreign policy in the Cold War.

3. Chinese Foreign Policy, 1949-1989

Chinese foreign policy during the Cold War was influenced by two main factors, ideological and security preferences.[4] These two sets of preferences were linked and mutually supporting. The combination of both was influenced by the state of domestic politics and by shifts of power in the international arena. The first decade of the PRC until 1958 is marked by Sino-Soviet cooperation and attempts to counter balance the United States. To achieve this goal, Mao saw the USSR as a crucial part of his domestic and international strategy and decided that one need to "lean to one side" (Mao, 1949; see Hunt 2008: 159-163; Liu 2000). China went through a period of isolation between 1958 (1960) and beginning of the 1970s and was in a situation where it has to face both superpowers concurrently. During this time, there were periods when ideological zeal prevailed over traditional power calculations. In spite of the fact that China under Mao was a revolutionary revisionist power *vis-à-vis* the international society, its foreign policy switched between phases of

more aggressive and reassuring Chinese diplomacy. China's use of force in international relations was much more prevalent in this era than during the Republic of China (1912-1949) or since the 1990s. Finally, since 1972 there has been a growing trend in Chinese foreign policy to normalise diplomatic relations with major and minor powers first in Asia and then elsewhere. After the brief domestic interlude, when China after the death of Mao was led by Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping as the paramount leader directed PRC's foreign policy out of the revolutionary trajectory.

China possessed a more revolutionary ideology than the USSR in the 1940s. One of the reasons was that the CCP's leadership had won in the civil war and established a truly sovereign political regime on Chinese soil in decades – at least – if not after the "century of humiliation" (see Hess, 2010; He 1994: 187-188). Mao's China was eager to show its negative view of current status of the international system right from the start. Long term Chinese struggle with Western "imperialist" powers also made possible growing attractiveness of Chinese ideas and achievements to countries around the world that were going through decolonisation. According to Mao's theory of intermediate zone of oppressed countries between the two superpowers (Strong and Kayser, 1985), it was necessary for China to support revolutionary and anti-colonial movements in Asia. Therefore, during a meeting between Stalin and prominent Chinese leader Liu Shaoqi in summer 1949 there was an agreement on "division of labour", where it was agreed that the USSR will be the leading socialist power internationally and China will become responsible for leading communist revolution in East Asia (see Shen and Xia, 2014). Judging this Chinese strategy, Barry Buzan writes that it was an "antithesis of peaceful rise" in the international society, when China alongside other communist states competed with the West over "future shape of international society" (Buzan, 2010: 11).

After the end of the Korean War and Stalin's death in 1953 the PRC pursued a more cautious and conciliatory foreign policy. Before and after the Bandung conference of the non-aligned states (taking place in 1955), the Chinese leadership wanted to secure stable international environment for devoting more resources to domestic issues, achieving better position in dealing with the West during the Geneva conference (1954), and finally improving their status with developing countries (see Zhai 1992). However, after a few years Chinese insecurity began to rise again because of the Sino-Soviet split (see Robinson, 1991; Whiting, 1987; Jian, 2010: 49-84; Radchenko, 2012; Li and Xia, 2014). The importance of the split for Mao's thinking and subsequent Chinese foreign policy shows how we need to take both national and international preferences into account in order to explain this particular behaviour. Since 1956, when Khrushchev openly criticised Stalin and his past policies during the 20th congress of the CPSU, we have

been witnessing growing ideological and political tensions in Sino-Soviet relations with a significant impact on Chinese strategic and ideological thinking. Mao became more suspicious of Soviet leaders' search for détente with the USA. He was well aware of US military might and regarded this accommodating posture towards the biggest capitalist state a sign of Soviet weakness. On the other, hand, Mao started to sense a growing importance of the PRC as the true leader of the communist countries, instead of the USSR.

The bilateral relationship with the USSR quickly deteriorated at the onset of the 1958 Great Leap Forward. It made the communist republic even more vulnerable than before due to the withdrawal of Soviet economic and technical assistance in 1960. Mao and Zhou felt encircled by political regimes friendly to the USA and bellicose towards China. Chinese sense of insecurity worsen again after a short border war with India (backed by Soviets) in 1962 (see He, 1994: 185-187). For Mao, Soviet abandonment during the Great Leap Forward was a sign of "revisionism" on the part of the Soviet leadership and clearly displayed their "big power chauvinism". But this revisionism in Soviet policy also presented a threat to domestic politics of the PRC, because it could affect even the CCP itself (Yahuda, 2011: 146). Once again it was shown that alliance policy towards the USSR is integral to Mao's goal to transform Chinese foreign and domestic policies (Jian, 2010: 49-52).

From the beginning of the 1960s, Mao has been claiming that Soviet revisionist policies are not able to fight western imperialism (Radchenko, 2012: 351-355, 360-362). The 1962 Cuban crisis only confirm the Chinese leaders' view that the Soviets are in fact weak and could not withstand American pressure. Furthermore, Soviet erratic diplomacy and lack of policy coherence only fed Chinese suspicion towards Kremlin. The escalation of the Sino-Soviet split was caused by ideological as well as power politics, with one of the most important being Beijing's effort to take the lead in the international communist movement. To a large extent, the PRC was successful in persuading many communist parties in the world to criticise the Soviets and support the Chinese position. From around 1962, Mao's foreign policy was based not merely on anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism, but with attempts to become the leading player among the newly decolonised countries of the Third World (see Jun, 2005). The PRC tried to take over the initiative to support progressive political forces abroad, including pro-communist forces in Cuba and the African continent where it devoted considerable resources, albeit on a smaller scale than the superpowers (see Cheng 2007; Schmidt 2013). The PRC was also seen as ideologically closer by many Third World governments, as it focused on the revolutionary role of rural masses (instead of stressing the role of urban proletariat, as the Soviets did) and promote the idea to achieve developed state of society by skipping some phases of modernisation, if the masses possess true revolutionary consciousness (Schmidt 2013: 268-269).

However, during 1963-1966 the Chinese met with a series of foreign policy failures (in Indonesia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Cuba). Some of the reasons for the failure of Mao's dealing with the Third World governments were narrowly stated goals, lack of actual capabilities and the support of insurgent movements in precisely those countries which Beijing wants to lead in the global war against imperialism (Robinson, 1991: 228). Also, Mao did not want to sustain high levels of foreign aid, as he needed crucial resources elsewhere. Fearing that China faces imminent security threat, Mao launched a massive program of reallocating China's industrial base to the country's interior (so-called "Third Front", *san xian*, see Naughton, 1988; Radchenko, 2012: 364; Fenby, 2009: 480). This step proves how concerns over security and ideology were inevitably linked in the PRC's decision making.

Nevertheless, in 1965, with the onset of the Cultural Revolution, there has been an even deeper radicalisation of China's domestic as well as international politics. Attempts on export revolution to underdeveloped countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa were intensified. The Cultural Revolution upheaval resulted in deterioration of almost all previously coordinated foreign policies. During this time China was in complete isolation – even among the countries of the communist bloc. Sino-Soviet rift, dating from the beginning of the 1960s, resulted in border clashes on the Ussuri River in 1969. During 1966-1969, "China purposely went into diplomatic isolation, kept foreigners out of the country, lowered the level of commercial intercourse with other countries, steered clear of international institutions, and substituted Maoist rhetoric for more tangible means of policy" (Robinson, 1992: 218). There were several places where the revolutionary violence spilled over (Hong Kong, Indonesia, Burma); however, these were results of domestic disorders than following consolidated Chinese foreign policy (see MacFarquhar and Schoenhlas, 2008: 224-227). In Southeast Asia particularly, revolutionary zeal and support for violent struggle to establish socialism proved Chinese lack of foreign political realism, along with a little understanding for the local environment (Boyd, 1970: 179-180).

After the end of the most violent phase of the Revolution in 1968/1969, Chinese foreign policy became more benign. Since the early 1970s, there were several significant changes observed in China's foreign policy. Most importantly, China normalised its relations with its long-time enemy the USA, starting with Nixon's visit to China in 1972, when both states issued the Shanghai communiqué (see Pollack, 1991; Kissinger, 2012: 202-274; Fenby 2009: 496-507).[5] This was followed by normalisation of relations with other non-communist nations. Second, with Mao dead in 1976 and the Gang of Four ousted shortly after, a constant reduction of class-based strategy in foreign policy followed with the political rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping. China abandoned its ideological self-reliance and widespread consensus

within the CCP emerged that economic development should take precedence in domestic and foreign policies. Third, the USSR replaced the USA as the most dangerous state for China.

4. Rebellion, Communism and Southeast Asia

Generally speaking, after its founding in 1949, the PRC wanted to pursue two goals which did not seem to be in contradiction to the Chinese leadership, but together they led in practical politics to inevitable discrepancies in dealing with Southeast Asia. These goals were to achieve independence in foreign policy and improve international status and security through promoting communist revolution.

The Southeast Asian region immediately after the Second World War consisted of various states and territories controlled and governed by colonial powers: the British (Malaya, Burma), the French (Indochina), and the Dutch (Indonesia). The Japanese, who were occupying much of Southeast Asia during WWII, granted independence to Philippines and Burma in 1943 and to Indonesia and Indochina in 1945. However, returning colonial powers have not yet been ready to cede sovereignty and tried to maintain their present territorial interests after the Japanese surrender in September 1945. The British, the Dutch, and the French all attempted to maintain what was left of their empires. The return of the imperial powers clashed of course with the interests of a plethora of pro-independence movements. Over time, the growing inability of colonial powers to control their dependencies became clear, and by mid-1960s the majority of Southeast Asia countries gained their independence.

Southeast Asian states faced similar challenges of a newly acquired statehood, ethnic and religious tensions within its population, disrupted economies and mostly westernised indigenous elites with a little knowledge of administration (Yahuda 2011: 32-33). Only some countries could draw upon the pre-imperial sources of common political and social identity; Vietnam and Thailand disposed of such traditions, but many others did not. New Southeast Asian states were established on the basis of former colonies with only marginal changes from the territorial boundaries that existed in the post-war period (Turnbull, 1992: 589). Different paths to independence had important consequences for foreign policies of the Southeast Asia countries, as the whole process was taking place during the beginning of the Cold War. Various natures of struggle for independence profoundly shaped the identities of the new Southeast Asian countries, which led to differences in their domestic and foreign policies. Subsequently, this placed them in different positions *vis-à-vis* the two superpowers (Yahuda, 2011: 55).[6]

Post-war Southeast Asia witnessed widespread political, social and economic unrest, but most of the population did not identify with their class in

political terms. One of the reasons why communist revolutionary movements were so weak around the region was that the solidarity was mainly to local social and political groups, not national or international groupings (Owen, 1992: 522). Reflecting their lack of support and limited aid from abroad, Maoist groups were small, underfunded and confined to certain geographical areas. National governments were usually successful in putting them down without the need to make concessions. Communist movements were less able to react to the environment of modernising Southeast Asia economies and their ideological appeal was growingly undermined by improvements in welfare (*ibid*.: 523). Even if the guerrillas were capable to fight for a sustained period, their capability to attract any popular appeal was marginal (Boyd, 1970: 186, 188, 193). Economic and political shortcomings of communist regimes in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, or China decreased the appeal of insurgencies around Southeast Asia; even more closing to the year 1989. Not only were the insurgencies led by communists unsuccessful in achieving their goals, but fostered authoritarian nature of many Southeast Asian regimes by legitimising autocratic and military rule (Turnbull, 1992: 600).

Southeast Asia was in contact with imperial China for centuries as a part of the Middle Kingdom's Sino-centric tributary system, but after Western powers took initiative in China in the 19th century, China was not able to sustain its strategic presence until achieving full independence under the communists in 1949. On the other hand, commercial relations between China and the Southeast Asian political units go far back into the history of this region and resulted in populous Chinese minorities in Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and elsewhere. With the fall of the Qing dynasty and the birth of Republic of China nascent Chinese nationalism became very important for facilitating the rise of indigenous nationalist movements around Southeast Asia. This trend only exacerbated long-term tensions between overseas Chinese communities and other ethnic groups. The overseas Chinese were seen as politically suspect by the colonial interwar governments, because, apart from the growth of Chinese nationalism among them, the Guomindang's overseas policy was strictly anticolonial (Stuart-Fox, 2003: 131-132). Also, a number of overseas Chinese have joined the ranks of communist parties some already during the interwar years and others later during WWII, and this trend was supported by the CCP propaganda (see Stockwell, 1992: 329-341).

Around 1949, the Chinese leadership believed that the victory of the CCP is just a first step towards general victory of socialism in Asia. Communist parties in Southeast Asia mostly participated in united fronts in 1947, but almost all resort to violence to achieve their goals in 1948 (Hack and Wade, 2009: 442). Ideologically speaking, the support for communist insurgencies was the result of socialist internationalism; on the other hand Mao and his

followers never let the strategic implications of the struggle over political systems in Asia out of mind. Thus, for much of the Cold War period of the PRC, but with different levels of intensity, Chinese leaders followed "dual-track" diplomacy towards countries in Southeast Asia, supporting ideologically close movements and trying to have friendly state-to-state relations at the same time. The support for communist rebels was strongest in Thailand and Burma with lesser involvement in the Philippines and Malaysia. Even when China favoured "neutralism" in international politics (around the Bandung conference for example), it did not abandon ties to communist parties in Asia and claimed these ties to be of a different matter than the state-to-state relations (Yahuda, 2011: 144). This kind of diplomacy was problematic mainly because it fed the suspicion of countries in Southeast Asia regarding Chinese foreign policy fundamentally double-faced. China's dual-track diplomacy was also only arranged in Southeast Asia. The CCP leadership was much more careful about supporting anti-government forces in Latin America or Africa and gave priority to building cordial state-to-state relations. When Mao was alive, the ideology of armed struggle was deemed as the core of revolutionary thinking. During its revolutionary phase in the 1960s, Chinese foreign policy verbally supported all the movements fighting imperialism, colonialism and Soviet "hegemonism", but the application of this policy was even in this period of highly ideological decision-making quite selective (Stuart-Fox, 2003: 177). Most of the crucial material assistance went to communist insurgencies in former Indochina, Thailand and Burma, and only a meagre support went to Malaysia and the Philippines.

What is rightly seen as China's aggressive stance towards non-communist countries until the 1970s was in fact a result of defensive strategy aimed at the USA rather than the result of ideological optimism and hope for quick victory in global communist revolution (Porter, 2005: 28-29). The revival of CCP backed insurgent activities in Southeast Asia was a direct result of domestic radicalisation during the Cultural Revolution. The impulse was thus exogenous to the movements themselves. Material support often denied by the CCP prior to the late 1960s was now distributed in much larger quantities; the same can be said about the direct involvement of People's Liberation Army (PLA) officials and advisors. Non-communist countries were suspicious of Chinese intentions and created the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in August 1967, which aimed at fulfilling national security goals – mainly as a defence against domestic communist insurgencies and growing Vietnamese threat (see Weatherbee, 2009: 72-75; Simon, 2008: 198).

In the 1970s, China's attitude towards Southeast Asian countries changed dramatically compared with its previous predominantly confrontational strategy. It happened via a slow abandoning of the revolutionary rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution and finding the *modus vivendi* with America.

Another major reason was the unification of Vietnam under the independent and primarily Soviet-supported Vietnamese Workers' Party in 1975. After the US withdrawal from Southeast Asia, the international struggle for power was reduced to Sino-Soviet competition – with Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia on one side, and China with ASEAN states on the other.[7] Vietnam became more suspicious of China and criticised its self-centred foreign policy, the Chinese on the other hand feared a strong Vietnam being instrumental to expansion of USSR's political influence in Asia. This trend became even more visible after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in December 1978, which was ruled by the deadly and virulently anti-Vietnamese Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot. The PRC steadily shifted its attention from communist insurgencies to achieve the normalisation of diplomatic and other relations with the states in Southeast Asia from 1975 to approximately 1981. In turn, domestic communist insurgencies in the region were further weakened by the governments' harassment and internal divisions over the ideology. This trend enabled closer cooperation of the non-communist ASEAN block as well as the normalisation of diplomatic relations with the PRC (Turnbull, 1992: 624).

As the USA was seen as a potential balance to the USSR, more friendly relations with countries in Southeast Asia were instrumental for the PRC in tackling the problem of potential Vietnam hegemony in Southeast Asia. Since then, we observe the PRC's foreign policy slowly downgrades the material support for communist insurgencies (moral support lasted until the 1980s) and to normalise its relations with non-communist Southeast Asian countries. After the return of Deng, ties with communist insurgent parties in Southeast Asia were not completely cut off but the material support was diminished, and the insurgents were being pushed by the PRC to negotiate with their respective governments. However, this was a long term process, and the PRC was unwilling to give up all relations with fellow parties in Asia, not even in exchange for a higher level of trust from the ASEAN states. Nevertheless, as China improved its relations with the USA and independent Vietnam backed by Soviets being more of a threat in Southeast Asia, Chinese "dual track" diplomacy was slowly abandoned. After 1982, the PRC proclaimed an "independent" foreign policy, which was supposed to be pursued apart from the interests of both superpowers (see Yahuda, 2011: 154-157; Sutter, 2013: 67-69; Deng, 2008: 5). One reason for a lessening of tensions in diplomatic relations between the PRC and non-communist states was decreasing sense of insecurity by Chinese leaders. Mao was constantly concerned about the insecure China's environment and proposed bellicose and chaotic foreign policies. From the end of the 1970s the Chinese leadership saw its foreign security environment as much more benign. Thus, Deng Xiaoping said that "it is possible that there will be no large scale war for a fairly long time to come and that there is hope of maintaining world peace (cited in Jian, 2012: 188).

Despite some suspicion and security issues between the PRC and the ASEAN countries, the 1980s saw steady improvements in political and mainly economic relations. During his visit to several Southeast Asian countries in August 1981, the CCP Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang stated that relations between CCP and other communist parties are only "political and moral" and that the CCP will not interfere with region's internal affairs (Heaton, 1982: 779, 781). Deepening China's political and economic ties with the ASEAN states nevertheless did not immediately transpose into full and immediate acceptance on the side of China's neighbours. Until the end of the Cold War, remnants of historical animosities undermined non-problematic diplomatic relationship between China and the ASEAN countries.

The shift in Chinese policy towards communism after Mao's death did not prove that Chinese diplomacy encouraging communist movements to revolt against their governments was hypocritical to that point – the state's preferences have rather shifted. From the 1970s to the 1980s, communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia had to face three negative developments: the withdrawal of external support, more effective government responses and fragmentation of internal party structures (Ladd Thomas, 1985: 18). From the late 1970s until 1989, Beijing had been switching its material support to communist movements that could have been helpful in fighting Soviet and Vietnamese "hegemonism", primarily the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia (Heaton, 1982: 796); and later abandoned the policy of supporting insurgencies abroad completely.

5. The Case Studies

To support the arguments presented thus far, I now turn to present two case studies of the CCP supporting communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia. In each country analysed here, I would like to show when and how communist insurgencies broke out and to what extent they were supported by the CCP. I will focus on how the communist insurgency support was influenced by domestic situation in China and the international Cold War environment. Due to limited space, only three of the relevant countries with communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia can be analysed here. I choose the cases of Thailand and Burma for similar reasons. Both countries witnessed direct material and ideological involvement of the PRC in domestic communist insurgencies, but unlike some other countries in the region (Indochina) there was small involvement by other communist powers, or was negligible.

5.1 Thailand

Thailand was the only country in Southeast Asia without colonial presence and was also endowed with high level of ethnic and cultural homogeneity apart from hosting a large community of overseas Chinese. Anti-Chinese

policies, based on supporting Thai identity and restricting Chinese commercial activity, were adopted already in the 1930s. Anti-communism ingrained in the thinking of Thai elite predated 1949 because communist ideas had become suspect already in the 1930s with the birth of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Thai elites before and after the war were in favour of capitalism, monarchy and Buddhism, ideas antithetical to communist ideology (Storey, 2011: 125). Also, one of the obvious results of pre-war Thai independence was that the CPT could not rest on any credential coming from anti-colonial resistance, neither could the communist parties in other Southeast Asian countries (Rousset, 2008).

Unlike other countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand was not occupied by Japanese forces during WWII. Instead, Thailand chose to bandwagon with Japan in WWII and kept its independence in exchange for economic and political support. This behaviour, however, did not later lead to any significant punishment by the victorious powers. Initially Thailand was not deemed much of an importance by the USA and the USSR. Then due to the Cold War, it became too important to be punished by its wartime collaboration. Nevertheless, Thailand had to revise its anti-communist policy because of Soviet pressure for some time (it needed the approval of the USSR to become a member of the UN) resulting in significant clandestine communist activity in the country (Stuart-Fox, 2003: 141; Rousset, 2008). After the Thai military had taken power in 1948, there was a growing sense of danger coming from communist China, which was only exacerbated as the CPC took over mainland China in October 1949.

Thailand did not recognise the PRC, but established diplomatic relations with Chiang Kai Shek's regime in Taiwan instead. For nearly three decades, Thailand saw communist China as an existential threat, both internally and externally. Not only was the PRC supporting rebel groups on Thai territory, but Chinese communist were also supporting radical movements in other Southeast Asian countries, who could in turn present a threat to Thailand. In a search for security, Thailand pursued a strict anti-communist strategy in domestic as well as in foreign policy and sought defence guarantees from the USA. Thailand devoted troops to the UN contingent fighting against North Korea and the PRC in the Korean War (1950-1953) and was instrumental in providing aid to anti-communist KMT groups based in North Burma. Growing willingness to support communist insurgencies in Thailand by the PRC only resulted in increase of American influence in Thailand and cemented their bilateral security relationship. Thailand finally achieved the security guarantees in the South East Asia Organization (SEATO), signed by its member states in 1954. Nevertheless, SEATO did not present a system of collective security comparable to NATO, for example. Later, in 1962, when Thailand was facing an upsurge of communist activity on its territory

(see below), the USA and Thailand declared in Rusk-Thanat communiqué that the Manila Pact could effectively function as a bilateral security pact (Weatherbee, 2009: 66). During the Second Indochina War, Thailand was (together with the Philippines) the only Southeast Asian country allied with the United States.

The deepening of Thai-US military cooperation was not merely the result of the escalation of conflict in Vietnam and its spill-over to Laos and Cambodia, but was closely connected to a new period of activity of the CPT. In 1961, the third congress of the CPT "effectively marked the inception of armed struggle, although much preparation was necessary to ready the forces before battle began" (Rousset 2008). However, until the mid-1960s the CPT presented a little threat, and, in the previous decade, the support for communism in Thailand from the PRC was only ideological (Storey, 2011: 126).

This situation changed in 1965, when Chinese foreign policy underwent yet even deeper radicalisation. The CPT proclaimed the beginning of a violent phase of the insurgency with official support from the CCP (Alpern, 1975: 687). At this time, there was also an upsurge of CCP sponsorship for insurgencies in Malaysia, Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines. CPT was strongly dependent on CCP not only ideologically, but also organisationally (CIA, 1973: 56). Several hundred PLA personnel joined the insurgents in the early 1970s, acting as advisors and training instructors. During this period, the PRC also supplied the insurgents with Chinese weapons and ammunition, something they refused to do before in order to avoid compromising themselves diplomatically (CIA, 1973: 5). The CPT insurgency developed because it could operate in geographically suitable locations close to the Chinese border. "Operating along the Indochinese borders and near China, the CPT benefited from important logistical, financial, military, and food support from its neighbours. It had diplomatic representation in Beijing and the backcountry of Yunnan. It opened bases in Laos where there were hospitals, schools, and training camps" (Rousset 2008).

In the mid-1970s, Thailand went through a political crisis, which was to certain extent connected with growing Thai involvement in the Second Indochina War on behalf of its American ally. This momentary attempt on installing a stable democratic regime in the mid-1970s nevertheless contributed, together with Sino-American rapprochement and growing Vietnamese power to the normalisation of Sino-Thai diplomatic relations in July 1975. At a meeting with the Thai leaders, Zhou Enlai assured his colleagues that China will not interfere with Thai internal affairs; however, political contacts between the CPT and CCP will remain in place. Despite the fact that Thai leadership remained suspicious about Chinese intentions, both states were able to cooperate, mainly in balancing unified communist Vietnam. Between 1976 and 1978, the insurgency was thus partly reinforced

by an influx of new sympathisers following the government's violence against political dissidents (Wedel, 1981: 329).[8] However, this trend prove to be short-lived and the CPT governed only a small portion of its former strength in the beginning of the next decade. There were three main reasons for this: more effective government anti-insurgency measures, the split of the communist party over the Third Indochina War, and fast decreasing level of support from the CCP. Students joining the ranks of the CPT were soon dissatisfied with lack of internal party democracy, reliance on outdated Maoist strategies of political and military struggle and dependence on ethnic Chinese (see Ongsuragz, 1982; Wedel, 1981; Wedel 1982).

The signing of treaty of cooperation and friendship between the USSR and Vietnam in November 1978 and subsequent Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in December that year deepened cooperation between Thailand and China. Thailand agreed to support the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia via its territory and the Chinese reduced material and ideological support to the CPT. In a very short time, the broadcast of Voice of Thai People Radio in 1979 was ended. In the same year, there was fierce internal debate over taking sides in Sino-Vietnamese dispute (see Marks, 1996: 55–57). The CPT decided to take the Chinese side and condemned Vietnamese invasion to Cambodia in 1978 and criticised the regime in Laos, which deprived the party of very valuable Vietnamese assistance and the CPT had to leave its bases in Vietnam and Laos (Ongsuragz, 1982: 369). Despite the fact that the CPT was following Chinese opinion in international politics, the CCP was slowly scaling down its support. By taking the Chinese side, the CPT lost all the support from the Communist Party of Vietnam, which was considerable from 1975 to 1978.

In a few years, the government's pressure and a lack of foreign funds doomed the CPT insurgency to failure and marginalisation. Amnesty for those guerrillas who would surrender announced by the government also significantly contributed to the weakening of the CPT. The PRC wanted to balance Vietnamese influence in Southeast Asia, for which it deemed necessary to support the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia through Thai territory. In order to achieve this goal, the PRC needed to be on good relations with Bangkok, combined with Thailand as non-communist state perceiving Vietnamese expansionism as a threat (Ladd Thomas, 1985: 19-20). Furthermore, while renouncing the support for the CPT the Chinese communist leaders were just following a general change in their foreign policy during the reform era.

As a result of this development from the mid-1970s, Sino-Thai relations were steadily improving, and since the beginning of 1980s, Thailand and China formed a *de facto* alliance against the threat of Vietnamese expansion. In November 1978, Deng Xiaoping visited Thailand where he defended Chinese strategy of improving relations and keeping ties with the communist

party at the same time (Heaton, 1982: 784). Party to party relations were a separate matter for Deng, but because the cooperation to fend off Vietnam was vital for Bangkok, they did not have a disruptive effect on Sino-Thai relations. Nevertheless, the support from the Chinese side was steadily decreasing in the following years. In a parallel motion, the number of members in the party was greatly reduced by mass defections and effective government action.

Not only was the Chinese support for CPT diminished, but the party itself became torn apart from inside by critics of heavy reliance on Chinese ideology and ethnic Chinese members (Ladd Thomas, 1985: 22-23). As the party grows increasingly isolated and its local support reduced, a withdrawal of external support from China and other countries proved to be decisive for the CPT's political survival. It is possible that even without the CCP's abandonment the CPT would dissolve under internal pressures and a lack of skills in accommodating various political and national groups under its wings. Its reliance on China in international relations and dependence on Maoist ideology proved to be unacceptable for many members of the party, who saw the party as more and more pro-Chinese rather than a Thai party. The CTP's lack of flexibility was also proved when the party stuck to its revolutionary principles while China was moving in the opposite direction. Once this ideological orientation is questioned and partially abandoned in the mid-1980s, it would be all too late (see Rousset 2008). Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been no visible activity of the CPT.

5.2. Burma

During WWII, the Communist Party of Burma (BCP) was a part of the anti-Japanese resistance alliance, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.[9] Burma was granted independence from Great Britain in 1948; however, it had to fight many communist and ethnic insurgencies during its early years of existence, and those were dubbed "kaleidoscope of insurgencies" because of their complex political and ethnic foundations (Smith 1991: 28; see Tucker 2001: 8-26). When Burma was heading towards independence in 1946-1948, certain disagreements soon appeared between the BCP and other political forces. The BCP split into two factions (the White Flag and the Red Flag) competing over the issue of cooperation with the non-communist forces, however, both later rebelled against the newly independent government. The reason was not international circumstances but primarily the communist fear of mounting state persecution. According to the BCP Central Committee, Burma was unfit for proletarian revolution and therefore the armed struggle should focus on rural guerrilla warfare. Until the mid-1950s the communist insurgency was quite successful and it was able to control large parts of the countryside in Central Burma (Lintner, 1990: 13-14).

Fearful of the newly formed PRC (October 1949) supporting domestic communist forces, Burma as the first non-communist state recognised communist China on December 16, 1949 (Fan, 2012: 8-9). Under prime minister U Nu, Burma tried to stay neutral in the Cold War environment, mainly accommodating communist China in the North and refusing to join western security alliances or accept significant foreign aid. Burma saw not antagonising Beijing as the main goal of their foreign policy and kept that line until the end of the Cold War (see *ibid*.: 9-14). By pursuing this neutralist foreign policy the Burmese achieved *modus vivendi* with China and communist insurgency was only marginally supported by the PRC at this stage. This enabled U Nu's regime to deal with the rebellion by the mid-1950s (Turnbull, 1992: 602). Thus, "in return for strict Burmese neutrality, China limited its support for the Burmese Communist Party to a level that prevented the BCP from seriously challenging the government in Rangoon" (Stuart-Fox, 2003: 188). Despite giving the Burmese communists vocal encouragement in their revolutionary efforts, neutral Burma was strategically more important than showing international communist solidarity. Good terms between China and Burma were cemented during the Bandung period (1954-1957), when the PRC's changed its foreign policy posture and for some time saw its main goals as securing a peaceful international environment.

This situation did not change much until the mid-1960s. In 1961, General Ne Win staged a successful *coup d'état*, and Burma's Revolutionary Council launched "the Burmese Way to Socialism" in 1962; thereby further deepening the country's international isolation. As a sign of more autocratic course taken by the government, the coup brought more discontented people into the BCP and renewed efforts of other insurgency groups (Smith, 1991: 198-199). Sino-Burmese relations nonetheless had remained stable for some time, and both states ratified a treaty in 1961 that ended their border disputes. Until the start of the Cultural Revolution, the PRC had not supported the BCP materially and kept correct state-to-state relations until 1967 (see Bert, 1985).

The PRC's stance towards the domestic situation in Burma changed during the early years of the Cultural Revolution when Burma became a target of chaotic, aggressive, and strongly ideological foreign policy. The situation deteriorated after the breakout of anti-Chinese riots in Rangoon in 1967 with Mao urging the support for an armed rebellion of the BCP and ethnic Kachin and Shan minorities against the Burmese state. The PRC's policy sends "slogan-chanting ethnic Chinese onto streets. Many were arrested, others attacked and killed. Chinese shops were looted. The Chinese Teachers' Federation building was burned down. The seal is torn from PRC's embassy. An embassy official is stabbed to death. The New China News Agency's correspondent is expelled" (Tucker, 2001: 226). Furthermore, Ne

Win was openly criticised as a "fascist dictator" by Chinese media (Seekins, 2006: 142). In 1967, the PRC established the "North-eastern Command (NEC) in the Burmese North in 1968 in order to support the communist revolution. In the same year, heavily armed CPB forces invaded the Shan state in the north; at its peak, the NEC had around 20,000 troops (Tucker, 2001: 170).

Not only was there material support (food, weapons and communications equipment), PLA soldiers also took part in the insurgency organisation and strategy. Even the PRC citizens on the Sino-Burmese border were recruited as "volunteers" to fight in the insurgency (see Lintner, 1990: 26, 35). The insurgency, based in the Shan state in the north, had close geographic proximity with south of the PRC (Yunnan) – and this was used to provide material and ideological support. Also, since 1971 the clandestine Voice of the People of Burma broadcast began operating from the Chinese mainland. Unlike the communist insurgency 15 years earlier, this time it was completely dependent on Chinese material support and was mainly composed of members of north Burmese ethnic groups. The insurgency was therefore strongest in the north and had little significance in Central Burma with predominantly ethnically Burmese population.

Burma, together with Thailand, was the only country where the PLA was closely cooperative with the insurgent forces. The PLA commanders issued advices and provided battle plans for the rebels. PLA officers also participated in guerrilla training in PLA camps in south China (CIA, 1973: iii). Clandestine radio broadcast not only provided ideological support, but also delivered detailed information to the insurgents about local political and military conditions. In Burma, members of the PLA became part of the BCP commanding structure (CIA, 1973: iv). In the early 1970s, the BCP was able to control 20,000 square kilometres of territory in the Shan state (Lintner, 1990: 26). However, the communists were unable to connect new territories in the north with some of the still functioning old revolutionary bases in central Burma.

Even with the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Burma maintained its foreign policy line and made no provocative steps towards Beijing.[10] After the most violent phase of the Cultural Revolution had ended, the PRC softened its approach and appropriately scaled down its support for communist insurgents in Burma (Turnbull, 1992: 623). Since Ne Win's trip to Beijing in 1971, Sino-Burmese relations again improved markedly resulting consequently in a lowering level of support going to the BCP from the Chinese side. With the Chinese rapprochement with the USA in 1972, Burma was also losing its geopolitical importance. We can see further progress in bilateral relationship after Deng Xiaoping's ascension in the late 1970s, when the PRC stopped its material support for the communist insurgents in

Burma altogether. The Chinese wanted to bring the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia out of isolation. Ne Win's visit was staged in Phnom Penh by the CCP and in return, the Chinese support for the BCP was being reduced (including the recall of Chinese "volunteers" from Burma, Lintner, 1990: 30). The CCP not only deprived the BCP of material support but also sharply reduced its revenues from cross border trade, having much to do with extensive opium smuggling (Tucker, 2001: chap. 7). Apart from geopolitical reasons, it also played a role when the BCP openly praised the Gang of Four in 1976 and sharply criticised Deng Xiaoping (Lintner, 1990: 29-30). From 1978, the BCP, now deprived of Chinese support, has become under heavy pressure from the military regime's forces. In 1981, Beijing helped to arrange unsuccessful negotiations between the BCP and government representatives. The Burmese communist tried several times during the 1980s to break out from their bleak political and military situation, but they did not succeed. For the rest of the decade, the BCP was isolated geographically around the Sino-Burmese border.

During the 1980s, Burma was becoming more dependent on China. This trend strengthened substantially after 1988 with the successful military coup and bloody suppression of student demonstrations. Military rule after 1988 pushed the country into an even deeper isolation, and economic and military ties with China grew in importance. As the BCP issue lost its sensitivity, both autocratic governments facing popular protests further cemented their relationship on the political as well as economic front. Lack of funds and material equipment, internal tensions and dwindling popular support resulted in inevitable decline for the BCP. "In April 1989, an uprising by ethnic Wa cadres effectively destroyed the BCP, which accompanied the Thai and Malayan communist parties into oblivion" (Stuart-Fox, 2003: 212; see Lintner, 1990: 39-46; Tucker, 2001: 175-176; 180).

Burma is the only non-communist state in Southeast Asia able to keep good relations with the PRC – discounting the Cultural Revolution period in the late 1960s (Bert, 1985: 979). This was achieved by carefully reacting to China's domestic and foreign policy and preserving a low key position in international relations. On the other hand, Chinese posture towards Rangoon was determined by the need to break "the encirclement" by US-friendly regimes in East and Southeast Asia and Burma's strategic geopolitical location (Fan, 2012: 17, 21-23). As in other cases, the highest level of CCP support for communist insurgency in Burma could be seen during the Cultural Revolution. Before it had been non-existent and afterwards it was sharply reduced because of China's new preferences in foreign and domestic policy. Domestically speaking, the communist insurgency was, as in the other Southeast Asian states, used for legitimisation of autocratic and military rule.

6. Conclusion

Even though the communist regime in China quickly rose to be the leader of the communist revolution in Asia after 1949, security and balance of power reasons have never been abandoned.[11] Supporting communist parties struggling with government authorities in Thailand, Philippines, Burma, or elsewhere were not just a result of the ideological nature of the new Chinese regime, but stemmed from the complex political situation in many Southeast Asian countries, bearing in mind that favourable results of these struggles could possibly improve China's security position. Indeed, clandestine Chinese support for various communist movements around Asia was sharply reduced after the end of the violent phase of the Cultural Revolution, mainly as a result of changes in foreign policy preferences. Aiming at slow normalisation of PRC's relation with its neighbours in order to strengthen the overall security position of China, secret contacts with movements and political parties fighting legitimate governments in Southeast Asia have become unacceptable. Looking at the whole post-Cold War period of Sino-Southeast Asia relations, we could say that until about 1975 China achieved very little and did not significantly shape the political development in the region (Wang, 2008: 188-189). This is also true of Cambodia, where the CCP was supporting the Khmer Rouge insurgency until its final settlement in 1991.

Chinese foreign policy towards Southeast Asia from the 1950s until the 1970s was influenced by ideological factors and followed the idea of international class struggle, but in many ways ideological goals were subordinated to Chinese security preferences. We could observe this in Malaysia, Burma, Vietnam or Indonesia. At the end of the Cultural Revolution, insurgencies based on the idea of violent rebellion were more in discord with how China wanted to shape its security environment, of which Southeast Asia was an important part. There were certain periods when revolutionary ideological factors prevailed (1963-1965, 1967-1972), however those years were exceptions than a rule. The support for fellow communist parties fighting their own governments was subordinated to stabilising China's *modus vivendi* with non-communist countries. The CCP's support for communist groups was verbal and ideological than material in many countries, all due to general Chinese security interests. However, security and ideological concerns were interlinked because the Chinese leadership saw ideological and security preferences as mutually supporting. Starting with China's opening to America, the CCP's ideology lost its revolutionary nature and instead started to promote regional stability and economic development as means to achieve socialism in China.

The insurgency support in Southeast Asia persisted most likely because of Mao's insistence on violent struggle to achieve communism that he

deemed separate from pursuing favourable regional balance of power. In the end, it seemed obvious even to the Chinese leadership that this strategy has failed. Thus,

> the newly independent countries of Southeast Asia were faced with the unenviable task of dealing with an erratic China. While some (Thailand, Burma) drew upon historically grounded international relations cultures to respond to China, if in different ways, for others (Indonesia, Malaysia) relations with China contributed to shaping newly evolving strategic and international relations cultures. For all, China was a threatening and disruptive presence, to be placated or kept at arm's length (Stuart-Fox, 2003: 222).

Insurgency support was a political and ideological failure. Nevertheless, the support for some communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia was being sustained well into 1980s. Our liberal model of foreign policy can provide several clues why this happened. First, foreign policy preferences are long-term aims whether strategies are of short- to middle-term use. Second, revolutionary zeal is often just an expression of weakness and internal disorder rather than expansionist interest. In the case of Chinese Cold War foreign policy, radical steps were taken at times when the leadership felt especially insecure or their international status was shaken. And third, the influence of ideology plays an important role if, as in the case of the PRC, political elites tend to see ideological and security goals as linked. When the political elites see growing discrepancy between two sets of important foreign policy preferences, they are forced to make decisions to achieve at least minimum success in both sets. If that is not possible, priority is given to those preferences which are considered as essential ones.

Notes

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1.   The position of Mao among his closest collaborators and his style of leadership is analysed in detail by Teiwes (1988).
2.   Mao willingly pursued aggressive foreign policy for achieving domestic mobilisations. During the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis he made the following statement: "We are calling every day for relaxing international tensions because

it will benefit the people of the world. So, can we say that it must be harmful for us whenever there is a tense situation? I do not think it necessarily so. A tense situation is not necessarily harmful for us in every circumstance; it has an advantageous side. Why do I think this way? It is because besides its disadvantageous side, a tense situation can mobilise the population, can particularly mobilise the backward people, can mobilise the people in the middle, and can therefore promote the Great Leap Forward in economic construction" (Liu, Jian and Wilson, 1995/96: 216).

3. So, for example, the Sino-Soviet split was a result of different ideas about superpower competition, the strategy of international communist movement and the nature of proper domestic communist regime as well. Future Chinese animosity towards the Soviets was also influenced by attempts to ensure that China will never again be used against its wishes or without its consent (see Taubman, 1996/97).
4. For general accounts of this period see Jian (2010), Sutter (2013: 28-58), Yahuda (2011: 137-159).
5. For some of Mao's ideas about revolution and international politics in the late 1960s see documents in Jian and Wilson (1998). See Hunt (2008: 163-171) for Mao's foreign policy ideas towards the USA prior 1949.
6. For more general background of superpower policy in the Third World, see Westad (2006).
7. For ideological competition among the Asian communist states see Shaefer (2009).
8. Rousset (2008) writes that "in the beginning of 1979, at its peak, it had 12,000 to 14,000 soldiers according to government estimates; according to other estimations, there were 20,000. Guerrilla zones existed in more than forty provinces and the CPT had influence in thousands of villages with a total population of more than 3 million."
9. The most authoritative text on CPB and evolution of its policy and organisational structure is Lintner (1990); see also Tucker (2001) for a good assessment of the post-1948 period in Burma.
10. Indeed, radicalisation of the local Chinese communities led to Burmese answer in the form of suppression of the political left and public anti-Chinese propaganda. This diplomatic break, however, lasted only for a short time until the beginning of the 1970s (see Robinson 1991: 242-244).
11. For an interesting comment on the role of ideology and security in the case of revolutionary regimes' foreign policy see Herz (1950).

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Institutionalisation of the Party's Leadership Nomination System: The "Path" to the Top in Communist China[+]

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Abstract

How are top leaders selected in Communist China? Following an in-depth literature review of Elite formation and selection inside the Chinese Communist Party, this paper posits the existence of a "path" leading to the top of the leadership structure. The latter is built around provincial experiences, specific positions in particular regions, age thresholds and other institutional constraints which regulate and organise access to the apex of the Party-State apparatus. Therefore, the objective of this research is to emphasise the more formal side of Chinese Elite politics and at the same time to provide "guidelines" as to where to look and what to look for when trying to identify "promotable" individuals for leadership turnover.

Keywords: *Chinese Elite politics, Elite formation in China, institutionalisation, leadership transition, Party-State apparatus*

1. Introduction

How are top leaders (i.e. members of the Politburo) selected in Communist China? Since the late 1970s, two main arguments have been developed regarding this specific inquiry. Influenced by the pre-reform political environment, the first one mainly exploits informal politics in order to explain leadership selection (e.g. Huang, 2000; Lam, 2006; Lam, 2007; Nathan, 1973; Tsou, 1976, to name just a few). However, there is an ongoing trend towards institutionalisation and formal politics that began during the reform era (Bo, 2007a, 2009; Zang, 2004, 2005; Zeng, 2013, 2014; Zhou, 1995; Miller, 2013)[1]. It also reshaped Elite formation and appointment structure (e.g. norms and procedures) inside the Party-State apparatus. Leadership transitions have since become less violent, more institutionalised and informal politics have

become somewhat less important (Dittmer, 1990: 405). Others argue that there exists a functional differentiation amongst Elites leading to two distinct career paths (i.e. the Chinese Government system and the Chinese Communist Party hierarchy), each having their own specific criteria and logic for selection and appointment (Zang, 2005; Zeng, 2013).

I concur with Zang Xiaowei[2] (2004, 2005) and Zhou Xueguang's (1995, 2001) position regarding institutionalisation of Elite formation and frame this article in a similar perspective. Furthermore, I also agree with Bo Zhiyue's (2003, 2014) ideas concerning specific variables (e.g. provincial experience) and their importance for top Elite selection. As such, I believe there exists "active" rules of promotion (e.g. formal institutional constraints)[3] that regulate the rise to top leadership. Thus, my argument resides in the existence of a "path" composed of an ordered set of positions, different regional experiences combined with a time threshold. In addition, age will determine whether an individual is later deemed "promotable" or "terminable" (i.e. the speed at which one can complete the requirements in order to be selected) (Yang, 2003; Zang, 2004).

First, I address current literature on leadership selection, more specifically, the factionalist approach and then proceed to examine other recurring elements such as seniority inside the Party and age (i.e. youth, rejuvenation). The latter two are framed under the notions of "active" and "passive" rules of promotion. Throughout this section, elements will not only be presented, but also their conclusions will be reassessed. Lastly, I will proceed to the demonstration. I present what I have identified as the "path" and address each of its components as to shed a new light on the Elite selection process in contemporary communist China. In turn, these elements could potentially help us identify "promotable" individuals for top leadership positions in the coming years.[4]

The contributions of this article to the field of Chinese Elite politics are both methodological and theoretical. First, contrary to the more widely used multivariate regression (Chen, 2014) and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Zeng, 2013; Huang, 2013a) (frequentist view), this article is inspired by a method similar to the "Bayesian" approach (occurrence view). The "frequentist" view, which is considered a traditional approach, is based on a more "bottom-up" research design and often qualified as more rigid (Longford, 2007). That being said, I do not oppose the two nor do I reject the "frequentist" approaches.

On the other hand, the "Bayesian" approach with its "top-down" design allows us to assess the leadership selection problem from a diametrically opposite angle (i.e. starting from the problem and trying to find the causes). In turn, this provides different results regarding certain aspects presented in the literature.

Furthermore, this article brings new elements to the recent leadership selection literature as it develops and provides a detailed description of the "path" to top leadership and optimises it as to combine age, preferred position and regional experience. It also brings overlooked elements, such as the age threshold between levels of leadership, as a key element for individuals to reach top leadership positions in due time.

Lastly, the article provides a new take on the notion of "seniority" by establishing these thresholds and combining them with key positions. As such, this study sets up the "priors" (i.e. top leadership shared characteristics) in order to assess their validity for ulterior modelling, testing and analysis.

1.1 Limits and Scope

This paper does not claim to determine a definite set of rules, lay down a decisive predictive model nor to fully explain leadership selection. Furthermore, considering space constraints, the paper cannot address all the variables present in the current leadership selection literature. It also does not attempt to foretell who will be nominated to the Politburo during the 19th Party Congress in 2017. *In addition, this article does not seek to replace factionalism and should be seen as a modest add-on to a pre-existing set of assumptions regarding leadership selection in China.* Informal politics will remain important and continue to influence policy process though mediated by institutional constraints. As such, both approaches (i.e. institutionalisation and factionalism) should be seen as complementary for two reasons: (1) where rules fail to explain specific appointments, factionalism can often offer precious insights and (2) to be part of a faction is no longer sufficient to be promoted as other criteria are now required to ascend to top leadership positions.

In addition, this study mainly deals with the 2012 iteration. The 16th Congress does not offer viable data as rules for retirement/promotion changed in 2002. As for the 17th Party Congress, its major concern was to prepare the next generation of leadership transition in 2012. As such, I have decided, just as Zeng Jinghan (2013) before me, to focus on the 18th Party Congress in order to draw the outline of what could be the new or the continuous sets of rules for leadership promotion.

Lastly, all information used to build the database, categorisation, enumeration and to perform tests are all available public information.

2. Factionalism: A Synoptic Appraisal

Factionalism is possibly the oldest and the most common approach used to explain leadership change inside the Politburo. Over the years, several authors have used it and participated in its further elaboration. We can think

of Andrew J. Nathan (1973), Tsou Tang (1976), Li Cheng,[5] Willy Lam (2006, 2007), Bo Zhiyue (2007a, 2009, 2012), Nan Lei (2009), Huang Jing (2000), Victor Shih *et al.* (2012) and Zeng Jinghan (2013) to name a few.

Factionalism posits factional relationships as the main explanatory variables concerning leadership change and nomination in communist China. The latter draws upon different key background elements, for instance, being an alumni of the same university (e.g. the Qinghua clique), sharing the same regional/provincial origin (Shanghai Gang),[6] members of the same mass organisation (Communist Youth League), association with older leaders (e.g. being under the "wing" of Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, etc.), and working in the same bureau/government office (Miller, 2010; Wang, 2006), in order to link Cadres and leaders together as to form a "faction". Some also acknowledge the existence of an Oil faction (Huang, 2000) and of a "returnees" faction (Li, 2006).

Earlier analysis tended to shift between the "winner-takes-all" approach (Tsou, 1976), wherein the objective is to destroy other contenders and to dominate the Party-State apparatus, and the "balancing" approach (Bo, 2007a, 2009; Nathan, 1973). The latter means that "a certain balance can be obtained amongst different players" (Bo, 2007a: 427). As such, the "balancing" approach is the direct opposite of the previously mentioned "winner-takes-all". It also signifies that distribution of positions and power inside both the Party and State apparatuses are creating a form of check and balances amidst factions.

Those earlier versions emphasised conflict-based leadership transition and are rooted in the pre-reform institutional arrangements (i.e. weaker institutions vs. usage of charisma) (Zang, 2005). Since then, most studies have tilted toward the second approach, thus putting more emphasis on bargaining, reshuffling and equilibrium between factions at the Centre.

Further mathematical models (e.g. game theory [Huang, 2000]) and multivariable analysis have also been used to test several hypotheses regarding the rise and decline of faction supporters (Shih *et al.*, 2012). Other analysis are slowly moving away from factions' overrepresentation in Chinese communist politics and are now paying attention to other variables, such as provincial experience (Bo, 2003), the importance of diplomas (Bo, 2012; Yang, 2003) and the age factor (Kou and Zang, 2014; Zheng, 2003).

Over the years, ambiguities, for lack of a better word, related to the factionalist approach[7] have been underlined. Most of these difficulties are, in effect, methodological (Kou, 2010b: 2).

First, definitions of "faction", "factional groups" and informal groups have not, since Nathan and Tsou, been reassessed by authors in light of the changing reality of Chinese politics.[8]

As such, categorisation remains problematic when using the notion of faction (e.g. placing a specific individual under the right factional etiquette).

When looking at different sources, it is sometimes difficult to place an individual in a faction (e.g. Liu Yandong and Li Yuanchao are both considered "Princelings",[9] associated to Shanghai[10] and to the Communist Youth League[11] due to their background (Bo, 2010: 30-31). What should we make of individuals such as Wang Qishan, who is said to be CYCL (Committee of Young Chinese Leaders) yet is the step-son of Yao Yilin[12] (Bo, 2010: 31)? And what of Han Zheng?[13] These are only a few of the "difficult" cases when it comes to making clear factional categorisation inside data sets. Zeng Jinghan also underlined this difficulty (i.e. identifying who belongs to which faction) (2013: 234) and suggested that other factors (e.g. the age factor, etc.) might be of greater importance when looking at leadership transition.

Lastly, using the notion of faction as an empirical indicator for analysis can also lead to certain issues. For instance, the "Princelings", as a group, does not fit the minimal requirements to be considered a faction under the approach as it is currently defined. To a certain extent, "Princes" and "Princesses" have their own network. They are also not necessarily fond of each other. Thus the "Princelings" have yet to be proven to form a cohesive group.[14]

As for the *Tuanpai* (团派), or CYCL, one question regarding their affiliation and identification comes to mind: as of 2014, there were more than 89 million *Tuanpai* members in China (RMRB, 2014). Taking into account everyone who has performed duties in this mass organisation to form one single faction is clearly overstretching the original meaning. To take into account Provincial and Central CYCL positions would still be stretching it too far (Breslin, 2008; Bo, 2007b). Instead, key positions should be set as indicators in order to make more precise analysis (e.g. the position of Communist Youth League First Secretary of the Central Secretariat [*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang shuji chu diyi shuji*, 共青团中央书记处第一书记]).[15] Accordingly, when looking at the Politburo (n=23), only 4 individuals[16] do have a main Provincial Tuanpai position (*Gongqingtuan sheng shuji*, 共青团省书记) and only 2 have the pivotal First Secretary position.[17]

To this effect, it is of no surprise that Bo uses the term "categorical group" to describe the *Tuanpai* (2007a: 240). Furthermore, according to Kou and Tsai, it is not shocking that more and more Cadres use the "CYCL" structure to ascend as it is a "career trajectory for aspiring leaders", most of them not tied to Hu Jintao (2014: 159-162).

The Shanghai Gang also raises issues: to which specific "Shanghai Gang" are we referring to? A careful literature review makes it possible to encounter two different "Gangs", both responding to distinct organisational logics. The first one, "Jiang-centric", revolves around the direct association with Jiang Zemin (Wang, 2006: 125). The second one is based on the "East China Commanding System" ties (*Huadong xitong*, 华东系统). It answers to a lineage logic (*xuetong*, 血统),[18] thus being closer to the "Princelings"

(Gao, 2001: 159). However, these details are sometimes not included in some analysis.

These are some of the difficulties encountered while looking at factionalism in terms of leadership appointment in Chinese politics. In other words, the main problems are its instability and its unpredictability (Zang 2005: 210; Zeng, 2013: 234). However, this approach should not be disregarded since "new" institutionalisation and formalisation explanations are emanating from it and still rely on it to provide further clarifications.

Factional ties, as a "required credential", are often considered to be part of the "active" rules of promotion, or something that is needed to climb the ladder of the leadership structure. Furthermore, it can also be considered a "passive" rule (i.e. which regards dismissals/retirements), especially when the factional balance shifts towards a different faction (i.e. the new leader might want to "reshuffle" the personnel and bring in close supporters).

To a certain extent, proponents of factionalism tend to consider "faction" as an independent variable whose presence/absence explains the top leadership nomination. Far from discarding the latter, I however believe that "faction" – as a recurring element – is to be considered as an intermediate variable whose presence/absence affects an individual's chances of completing, in due time (i.e. remain promotable) the institutional requirements that make up the "path". Therefore, to be part of a "faction" helps to obtain qualifications and to get them faster. However, being a member of a "faction" does not guarantee reaching the top rather than to be more easily considered for a series of "mandatory" positions needed to reach the latter.

I also wish to stress, as Zeng (2013: 228) and Breslin (2008: 221) did before, that *the Party does not have a factional policy*. Consequently, one of the latent objective of this paper is to divert from the use of the factional variable as many other studies have already measured it before (Shih *et al.*, 2012; Zeng, 2013). Therefore, the factional variable's inclusion would not enable us to expand nor further develop the current hypothesis and results regarding the "path" and it would go well beyond the scope of the current research's limitation.

Accordingly, I wish to ponder other explanatory venues which emphasise formal rules and constraints. Therefore, this paper focuses on what Bo (2010) and Kou (2010b) call "Paths to the top" and is framed on the "formal side" of leadership selection and appointment.

3. Functional Differentiation and the Importance of Geographic/ Political Positions

There exists a division of labour between administrative and political positions inside the Party. The latter allows for the separation of top Elites in

two distinct groups: (1) deciders and (2) policy implementers. The first ones being the most important (Payette and Mascotto, 2011: 147). This functional differentiation system (*fenshuhua*, 分殊化)[19] has been underlined by both Zang (2005, 2005) and Zhou (1995, 2001) in a similar fashion. The division is made amongst four specific groups (Zhou, 1995: 442):

1.   Administrators (*xingzheng ganbu*, 行政干部);
2.   Technocrats (*jishu ganbu*, 技术干部);
3.   Managers (*guanli ganbu*, 管理干部);
4.   Politicrats (*zhenggong ganbu*, 政工干部).

Both Zang and Zhou demonstrate the existence of a dual structure (politicians/administrators) which is a result of the reform process (Zang, 2004). Accordingly, there is an Elite stratification that leads to different (1) career paths, (2) mobility/promotion/recruitment structures, and (3) roles inside the Party-State apparatus.

For political positions, Party seniority and political loyalty[20] are favoured, and for the three other cases, education and expertise are privileged (Walder, 1991; Zang, 2005; Zhou, 1995). As such, both education and expertise will be more important for administrative positions than for Party positions (Zhou, 1995, 2001). Hence, the State administration and Party apparatus are targeting different individuals according to either political credentials or technical expertise.[21]

The Elite distinction I posit is slightly different from both Zang and Zhou as it uses the simple *Tiaotiao/Kuaikuai* (条条/块块) organising principle as the positioning system. Furthermore, using *Tiao/Kuai*, which is in of itself a binary structure, simplifies the dual track system by being able to encompass more positions and by drawing a simpler line between Politicians and Administrators. As such, *Tiao/Kuai* supposes a functional differentiation between the administrative and political structures and between administrators and politicians (Politicrats) [Table 1].[22]

Contrary to Zang and Zhou, Governing – Political – positions encompass Governors, Vice-Governors as well as Provincial Party secretaries [Table 2].

Table 1 Division of Labour Inside the Party

Position	Type	Nature	Examples
Tiao (条)	Functional	Administrative	Minister, Bureau Director, Section Chief.
Kuai (块)	Geographic	Political	Provincial Party Secretary, Provincial Party Vice Secretary, Governor, Vice-Governor, City Party Secretary, Mayor.

Table 2 Hierarchical Structure

Rank	Name (Chinese)	Name (English)	Position (Example)
1	国家级正职 (*Guojiaji zhengzhi*)	National Main Position	Politburo Standing Committee, Prime Minister
2	国家级副职 (*Guojiaji fuzhi*)	National Vice-Main Position	Politburo Member, Vice-Prime Minister
3	省部级正职 (*Sheng Bu ji zhengzhi*)	Provincial/ Ministerial Main Position	Governor, Minister, Provincial Party Secretary; CYCL First Secretary of the Central Secretariat, State-Council Central Bureaus Director, etc.
4	省部级副职 (*Sheng Bu ji fuzhi*)	Provincial/ Ministerial Vice-Main Position	Vice-Governor, Vice-Minister, Sub-provincial District Mayor, Sub-provincial Autonomous Prefectures Governor, National Bureaus Director, State Council Central Bureaus Vice-Director, etc.
5	厅局级正职 (*Ting Ju ji zhengzhi*)	Office/Bureau Main Position	Bureau-Chief, Prefecture-level Cities Mayor, Prefecture-level Cities Party Secretary, Provincial-level Office Director, etc.
6	厅局级副职 (*Ting Ju ji fuzhi*)	Office/Bureau Vice-Main Position	Prefecture-level Cities Vice-Mayor, Sub-provincial Cities District Head, Prefecture-level Cities Bureau Director, etc.
7	县处级正职 (*Xian Chu ji zhengzhi*)	County/ Department Main Position	County-level Cities Mayor, Prefecture-level Cities District/ County Head, Prefecture-level Bureau Chief, etc.
8	县处级副职 (*Xian Chu ji fuzhi*)	County/ Department Vice-Main Position	County-level Cities Party Secretary, County-level Cities Mayoral Assistant, etc.
9	乡科级正职 (*Xiang Ke ji zhengzhi*)	Township/ Branch Main Position	Township Party Secretary, Town Mayor, County Level Bureaus Chief, etc.
10	乡科级正职 (*Xiang Ke ji fuzhi*)	Township/ branch Vice-Main Position	Township Vice-Party Secretary, Town Vice-Mayor, Working Unit Vice-Director, etc.
11	科员 (*Ke yuan*)	Branch Staff	
12	办事员 (*Banshi yuan*)	Working Unit Staff	

Note: This list contains public information.

As for the functional administrative positions – *Tiao*, they are administrators and managers. This includes Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Bureau Chiefs, Section Chiefs, etc. [Table 2]. I assume, as did Zang (2004), Zhou (1995), Bo (2003, 2014), and Chen and Chen (2007), that occupying political positions (e.g. a series of *Kuai* positions) leads to faster promotion inside the Party-State apparatus.

Individuals coming from the *Tiao* structure will, at times, be put on a *Kuai* path in order to be nominated to key Party positions. Therefore, switching from *Tiao* to *Kuai* is crucial for any Cadre seeking to improve his conditions. For example, we can think of a minister later on becoming a provincial governor/Party Secretary. Furthermore, as Zhou puts it, career paths are directly tied to resources allocation and life chances (1995: 444). On the other hand, individuals already vested on a *Kuai* path will rarely digress to later on become administrators/managers (*Tiao*). Such changes would be seen as demotions or as a failure to be promoted to a higher echelon.

This paper focuses on the *Kuai* – Politicrats – career path and ponders how and according to which criteria individuals are selected to higher political positions inside the Party-State. Accordingly, Diagram 1 [Annex B] clearly demonstrates the presence of strong links between higher Party position and enumerated *Kuai* positions [Table 2].

4. The Rules of Nomination

This section primarily deals with the next three most commonly found elements regarding Elite selection and promotion in the literature: (1) age; (2) education; (3) Party seniority. Furthermore, as it will become relevant in upcoming parts, this section first introduces the notions of "active" and "passive" rules of appointment/dismissal.

4.1 Notion of "Active" and "Passive" Rules

In order to understand the demonstration and the general inquiry into the Chinese leadership and Elite nomination system, it is crucial to explain and define what is meant by both "active" and "passive" rules of appointment/dismissal [Table 3].

Active rules are needed elements, without going so far as to say "necessary", in order to both progress and possibly reach the top of the Party-State apparatus. Passive rules, on the other hand, are present at critical junctures and posit limitations to a certain position. As such, Party members are subjected, and somehow constrained, to these passive rules. Thus, if a Cadre's required promotion criteria are not met, passive rules will either dictate resignation or to remain "stalled" at the same level.

Table 3 Active/Passive Rules

Type	Object	Brief Definition	Example
Active	Concerns appointments/ promotions	Elements needed in order to progress inside the Party-State apparatus	Specific credentials or experience required for a position; factional ties
Passive	Concerns dismissals/ retirements	Critical points that, when reached, require dismissal/retirement	Age limit for a specific set of positions; investigation for wrongdoing; factional ties; ten-year tenure

In some cases, nominations can actually be informal demotions. For example, being nominated to either the Consultative Conference or the National's People Congress, despite having high constitutional value, is not considered to be a promotion but rather a dead-end or, depending on the individual's age, a way to "age actively" (*fahui yure*, 发挥余热) (Kou, 2010b: 12).

This notion of active/passive rules, is specific to this inquiry and analysis. As previously mentioned, the factionalist approach would fall on the "active" rules side as being, according to some, a defining element, if not the only one, explaining nominations to top leadership positions.

4.2 Age and Rejuvenation

4.2.1 Age Ceilings and Dismissal/Retirement

Since the 16th Party Congress, rules regarding rejuvenation and compulsory retirements inside the Party have been pushed to the forefront by the Central Leadership. These rules and rejuvenation mechanisms predate the 16th Party Congress. The Retirement System has been implemented since the early 1980s under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping (Yang, 2003: 113).

The best example of the latter is probably the "ceiling of 70 years old" (*qishi sui huaxian litui*, 七十岁划线离退),[23] the first formally institutionalised criterion (Kou, 2010a: 107).[24] This particular retirement rule is now applied at most levels and was imposed on both future Cadres as well as, in 2002, current ones (Kou, 2010b: 13).[25] This decision also provided guidelines for the selection of Cadres, such as trying to maintain the average age of the Politburo around 60 years old (Kou, 2010b).

Age limit regarding retirement below the Central leadership was also lowered. According to Kou, the new limit for the Politburo should be 68 (2005: 151-155). Furthermore, we know that Cadres of both vice-ministerial

and ministerial levels must retire (if not promoted) at 60 and 65 years old respectively (Huang, 2009: 167).[26] Provincially ranked Cadres must also leave at 65, sub-provincial at 60, and prefecture-level cities Cadres at 60.

Furthermore, the Central Organization Department has implemented the "2-5-8 requirement" (*er, wu, ba, nianling yaoqiu*, 二，五，八年龄要求) (Kou, 2010a: 194; Zheng, 2003). This implies that section chiefs (*kezhang*, 科长), department chiefs (*chuzhang*, 处长) and bureau chiefs (*sizhang*, 司长) must leave their forefront position – if not promoted – at 52, 55 and 58 years old respectively (Zheng, 2003: 175-190). Even if giving a complete overview of those retirement regulations is not possible, it is certain that Cadres from both the Party and the Government are now facing restrictions in terms of age (Huang, 2009: 84).[27] This idea of Party rejuvenation is also commonly found inside the leadership transition literature (Yang, 2003; Baum, 2011; Bo, 2012; Lam, 2007).[28] As previously stated, this idea, though not new, deserves attention as it lends a lot of importance to age, as a variable, accounting for Cadres' appointment.

As explained, there are now age limits to compel retirement at various levels inside the Party-State apparatus. These were made a priority by Deng Xiaoping after 1978 (Harding, 2011: 152). These "passive" rules are also used as a generational replacement mechanism (Wu, 2004: 70) and during the Central reshuffling (*huan jie*, 换届) process taking place during Party Congress meetings.

Table 4 Age of the Central Committee (CC), 2012

Age Classes	CC (n2)	PB (n1)	[42 Military+ 6 Exclusions]	Total	% of Total
[40-42]	2	1	0	3	1.46
[43-45]	1	3	0	4	1.95
[46-48]	3	2	0	5	2.44
[49-51]	10	5	1	16	7.80
[52-54]	15	4	3	22	10.73
[55-57]	**42**	**7**	**13**	**62**	**30.24**
[58-60]	**46**	**0**	**26**	**72**	**35.12**
[61-63]	15	1	5	21	10.24
Total	134	23	48	205	100.00

Note: Some of the data in Table 4 (e.g. age composition of the Politburo (PB)) has been presented in Zeng (2014: 301) for the 18th Congress. The data sets for the 15th, 16th and 17th Congress can be found in Huang (2013: 27) and in Bo (2009: 37).[29]

Further constraints also exists when it comes to promoting the Party's rejuvenation and avoiding too many "aged" officials/cadres from certain Party organs:

1. Under no circumstance must the age of members nominated to the Central Committee be above 64 years old[30] [Table 4];
2. Ministerial or Provincial level Cadres wanting to be nominated to the Central Committee must not be older than 62 years old;
3. Those of vice-ministerial rank [Table 4] wanting to be appointed to the Central Committee must be under 57 years of age (Kou, 2010a: 156-157).
4. Party leaders must also, when promoting Cadres to the Central Committee, select "excellent" members under 50 years old.

As such, age is now considered to be of utmost importance when selecting both the top leadership and other lower Party Cadres (Huang, 2010: 22-23; Kou, 2010a). Furthermore, these "passive" rules are acting as "active" rules for younger Cadres wanting to ascend to higher positions inside the Party-State apparatus.

Local Cadres (County Main position [*xian chu ji zhengzhi*, 县处级正职] and Township Main position [*xiang ke ji zhengzhi*, 乡科级正职]) [Table 2] also have specific appointment rules. County officials should not exceed 45 years of age when appointed, while they should be below 40 to be appointed to Townships main positions[31] (Yang, 2003: 112). According to Yang, this makes political careers at these two levels very brief for Cadres: if one gets appointed at any of those levels between 35-45, their career is practically already over (Yang, 2003: 113).[32]

The Party's age composition must reflect the contemporary Chinese population's characteristics, hence the establishment of the rejuvenation program during the 15th Party Congress in 1997 (Kou, 2010b: 8).

4.2.2 The Party "Rejuvenation" Hypothesis

During the 17th Party Congress (2007), newly appointed Politburo (PB) members (10) aged 59 years or less represented 60 per cent and those aged 60 and above, 40 per cent. However, in 2012, newly appointed members (15)[33] of 59 years of age or lower represented 46.67 per cent of the nominations, those 60 years of age and above, 53.33 per cent.

This observation begs the question of whether or not there is an actual rejuvenation of the top leadership structure and if youth, relatively speaking, is as decisive as some would argue. As previously described, some rules are now in effect to reduce the aging of the Politburo. However, after computing and testing the data, regardless of the slight fluctuation in the overall average from 1987 to 2012, age remains statistically non-significant.

Table 5 Politburo Data Sets

	1987	*1992*	*1997*	*2002*	*2007*	*2012*
Age Average	64.583	62.45	63.364	60.708	61.76	61.16
Remaining Age Average	70.429	62.5	65.143	62	64	63
Appointed Age Average	56.4	62.429	60.25	60.067	58.4	59.933
Variance (VAR)	74.447	36.892	31.576	10.998	18.357	26.723
Remaining VAR	28.952	21.5	23.670	8.286	3.857	16
Appointed VAR	17.8	45.648	33.357	11.663	22.044	31.495
Standard Deviation (STDEV)	8.628	6.074	5.619	3.316	4.284	5.169
Remaining STDEV	5.381	4.637	4.865	2.878	1.964	4
Appointed STDEV	4.219	6.756	5.776	3.415	4.695	5.612
Number of Values	12	20	22	24	25	25
Coefficient of Variation	13.4%	9.7%	8.86%	5.46%	6.9%	8.45%

Note: The three first rows, have been presented under different forms by Zeng Jinghan (2013) and Li Cheng (2013: 3). Appointed and incumbent member's age and other calculations such as Standard Deviation can also be found in Huang (2013: 27).

Graphic 1 PB Average Age, 1987-2012

I first performed a trend analysis (1987-2012) to calculate the slope (b)[34] in order to effectively see the rejuvenation of the Politburo's members. The result of the equation[35] indeed shows a progressive average age decline. Linear regression showed a slight variation.[36] Also, the trend line [Graphic 1]

shows a correlation.[37] However, further explanations are necessary. As such, I decided to use the trend result because another methodology was needed to predict, and the trend allowed me to make this projection.

When looking at the trend result, we can see that 37.6 per cent of appointments cannot be explained using age as a primary variable. Furthermore, this explanation (i.e. Party rejuvenation) is rather implicit and also structural: it is required by the institution itself (Yang, 2003). Hence, the regression of around 1/12 of a year (1 month) per year, or less than 6 months per 5 years, does show a slow, yet steady rejuvenation. Nonetheless, I believe this result cannot be understood as a conclusive proof regarding primary rules of appointments.

I also performed *t*-tests between the age average of 1987 and 2012[38], 1997 and 2012,[39] 2002 and 2012,[40] and between 2007 and 2012.[41] As their results indicate, all were statistically non-significant. I followed with several unilateral student *t*-tests (i.e. within all the newcomers) [Annex C]. All, except for one (i.e. 1997-2002), were statistically non-significant. This is explained by the implementation of the rejuvenation plan during the 15th Party Congress and its reinforcement during the 16th in 2002. Otherwise, this is the only time rejuvenation or youth can be seen as a statistically significant variable for top leadership promotion [Annex C].

Regardless of the impression of a more important rejuvenation when looking at the 3.42 years decrease between 1987 and 2012 [Table 7], it remains statistically non-significant with a relatively weak S_p^2. Variance and Standard Deviation [SD] also show greater homogeneity in the Politburo's age composition.

The argument regarding rejuvenation seems to be focused on the 2002-2012 decade. When looking at the SD, which remains high, we can see a rising number of increasingly younger individuals entering the Politburo. To this effect, new members are effectively younger. However their impact on the overall average age remains limited considering the high degree of fluctuation noticed in the SD and the few "very young" individuals.

Thus, age, youth specifically, is not a statistically significant variable when it comes to leadership selection inside the Politburo. Furthermore, the trend equation result is mostly mediated by what I have called the "path", namely its length and the speed at which individuals can actually complete its requirements. This, in turn, has been shown by the *t*-tests. Hence, all these elements are pointing in the direction of the main hypothesis regarding the "path" (i.e. specific qualifications and experiences).

4.2.3 Seniority in the Party or the "Loyalty" Component

As previously mentioned, one of Zang and Zhou's[42] hypotheses is concerned about Party seniority as a leading criterion for Politicrats' promotion.

Table 6 Party Seniority (2012)

Entry Year	Duration (years)	n1	Group %	n2	Group %	n1+n2	Total %
[1964-1968]	48-44	3	13	2	1	5	3
[1969-1973]	43-39	8	35	41	31	49	31
[1974-1978]	38-34	6	26	52	39	58	37
[1979-1983]	33-29	4	17	19	14	23	15
[1984-1988]	28-24	2	9	17	13	19	12
[1989-1993]	23-19	0	0	1	1	1	1
N/A		0	0	2	1	2[43]	1
Average Duration	33.5						
Total		23		134		157	

Source: Author's own database.

When looking at Party Seniority (2012) [Table 6], we can see that duration composition is relatively similar between the Politburo (*n*1) and the Central Committee (*n*2). Furthermore, the largest class, which would be [1971-1976],[44] contains 87 individuals (55 per cent) of the Politburo and the Central Committee (n=157). Of those, 23 (26.4 per cent) are part of the Politburo. This leaves out 64 individuals (74.6 per cent), even when considering seniority as a crucial criterion.[45] Thus, there are other mechanics at work other than simply the time spent as a Party member. For example, some local-level Cadres can spend 30 plus years rotating around the same level without any vertical promotion.

Current literature on seniority (Miller, 2013; Shirk, 2012) focuses on a similar argument. Miller states that it is simple "arithmetic" and that seniority follows generations and predefined age limits. Shirk sees seniority as a way to manage competition inside the Party. However, as Table 6 clearly demonstrates, seniority itself is not sufficient to explain promotion. To this effect, I am more inclined to agree with Zeng Jinghan and Kou Jianwen, who actually saw that seniority was accompanied by "step-by-step promotions" [Zeng, 2013: 228; Kou and Tsai, 2014].

4.2.4 Diplomas or the Issue of Educational Differentiation

Educational requirements have been mandatory in order to reach higher rankings inside the Party apparatus since the late 1970s (Yang, 2003: 127) and were actually part of the Cadre's "4 transformations"[46] advocated by Deng

Xiaoping (Yang, 2003: 127). According to Yang, the educational requirements' main objective was to encourage the rise of the new technocratic Elite during the early 1980s while at the same time preventing the rise of "lesser elements". That being said, Yang acknowledges the fact that some of the diplomas (e.g. those delivered by the Central Party School) are more than questionable (2003: 110).

As for the 18th Party Congress, members of the Politburo all have post-secondary education [Table 7]: 26.09 per cent obtained a Bachelor's degree, 47.83 per cent a Master's degree, and 21.74 per cent a PhD.[47] For the second group (*n*2=134), 13.4 per cent have a Bachelor's degree, 59 per cent a Master's degree, and 26.9 per cent reached the doctoral level.

Table 7 Education (Politburo and Central Committee)

Group	n	B.A	% on group	M.A	% on group	PhD	% on group	Other	% on group
PB (*n*1)	23	6	26.09	11	47.83	5	21,74	1	4
CC (*n*2)	134	18	13.40	79	59.00	36	26,90	1	1
(*n*1+*n*2)	157	24	15	90	57	41	26	1	1

Note: Data has been presented in Sun and Han (2012) and Jun Zheng (2012). Bo Zhiyue also presented the educational background of Provincial Leaders (2007-2012) (2014: 68) and the of the 17th Central Committee members (2009: 54).

Table 8 Education (Ministers)

Group	n	B.A	% on group	M.A	% on group	PhD	% on group	Other	% on group
Ministerial Group (2008-2013)	24	1	4.2	12	50.0	10	41.7	1	4.2
Central Bureaus (2008-2013)	9	1	11.1	3	33.3	5	55.6	0	0.0
Total	33	2	6.1	15	45.5	15	45.5	1	3.0

Source: Author's own database.[48]

Table 8 presents education background of both the State Council's Ministerial components (*Guowuyuan zucheng bumen*, 国务院组成部门) and Ministerial-level agencies directly under the State-Council (*Zhenbuji Guowuyuan zhishu jigou*, 正部级国务院直属机构). Despite mostly over-lapping with the Central Committee, these two groups, as administrators/

managers or *Tiao*, help us understand and further exemplifies the dual track system, its specific criteria and logic for selections and appointments.[49]

In turn, this points out to Zang and Zhou's conclusion regarding the higher importance of diplomas for administrators rather than Politicrats. Through comparing their backgrounds with that of the Politburo members, we can see, when looking at cumulative frequencies of graduate and post-graduate diplomas, a difference averaging 20 per cent in favour of the Ministerial components (22.13 per cent) and Ministerial-level agencies (19.33 per cent). This goes to prove, to a certain extant, that education is of more importance for administrators than for Politburo members (i.e. top Politicrats).

Lastly, more ample analysis have been done elsewhere regarding the importance of education (i.e. undergraduate and graduate diplomas) and its consolidation as a basic requirement for Cadres' appointments since the Deng era (Chen, Chen and Chen, 2012; Li, 2013).

4.2.5 Cadres' Performance and "Being investigated"

The reader will note, I did not address the meritocratic argument in this section. Several studies exist on meritocracy as an important criterion for Cadre's promotion/demotion. In lots of cases, economic performance has been seen as a factor linked to promotion (Choi, 2012; Guo, 2007; Li and Zhou, 2005). However, the opposite has been argued as well (Shih *et al.*, 2012; Landry, 2003). Therefore, there is no clear consensus on this matter.

This debate also raises issues regarding the measurement of performances: is economic growth attributable to the Cadre's agency or to the existing economic structures? Also, we must be careful in using performance criteria since a small increase in an economically weak province would result in a higher percentage increase. Nonetheless, considering the goal (i.e. the path) and the space constraints, it was not possible to add this variable into the current analysis.

Lastly, being investigated for wrongdoing is also considered to be a passive rule as it represents a form of critical juncture for any individual. Being under investigation will drastically alter the chances of promotion for any Cadres and officials regardless of their current rank (e.g. former public security vice-minister Li Dongsheng (李东生), former Chongqing Party secretary Bo Xilai,[50] former National Development and Reform Commission vice-chairman Liu Tienan (刘铁男), to name just a few).

4.2.6 Remarks

Professional experience also forms a prerequisite for nomination. Bo Zhiyue already saw the recruitment potential of Provincial nomenclatures (2003)

and underlined the importance of this specific ranking level. He was later followed by Chen and Chen (2007: 57-85) who went one step further by saying that Cadres working in rich East-Coast Provinces had more chances to be nominated at the top. This meant that not only were Provincial positions important, but the province itself could be of significance for nominations. These elements will be a focal point in the upcoming demonstration.

Hence, in order to be promoted to the highest institution of the Party (i.e. the Politburo), one needs, all other things being equal or held constant, to satisfy an ever-growing list of prerequisites. Going over a position's limitation is no longer seen as possible since Hu Jintao broke the previous "Mentor politics" (Wu, 2004) path laid by both Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin (i.e. keeping the Central Military Commission [CMC] Presidency for an additional 2 years). Direct nominations (e.g. the decision of Deng Xiaoping to choose Hu Jintao to succeed Jiang Zemin) are no longer possible and should be seen as exceptions jeopardising the internal stability of the Party (Kou, 2010b: 10).

5. Demonstration: the "Path to the Top"

The demonstration proceeds from Robert Putnam's assumption regarding Elites: "individuals toward the bottom of the political stratification lack nearly all the prerequisites for exercising political power, whereas those toward the top have these characteristics in abundance" (1976: 26-27). Thus, prevalent characteristics have been selected as possible prerequisites.

Furthermore, I believe the Politburo is indicative of a certain set of rules when it comes to leadership selection. As such, by observing this group, some patterns emerged and some specific sequences (in terms of position) were identified. The elements I will focus on during the demonstration are siding with what we have previously labelled the "active" rules of promotion.

First, I will go back to the age factor in order to look at it from a different angle. Age itself has been proven to be more or less significant in terms of promotion. However, the latter plays a crucial role when understood in terms of thresholds between leadership levels. Second, I will assess a recent more commonly found element in the literature – Provincial experience. However, I will go one step further than current analysis by postulating that not only does the latter matter, but certain regions are favoured for the "path". Third, there are key positions "needed" in order to be deemed "promotable". These are *Kuai* ones – geographic/political. The fourth point overlaps both the Provincial experience and the *Kuai* position argument: not only are these two criteria of crucial importance, but certain positions are also favoured in specific regions making the completion of the "path" more arduous. Moreover, I briefly review some non-conclusive criteria that I previously tried to *operationalise* while building the data sets.

Finally, all of the identified criteria constitute what I previously called the "priors". As such, this demonstration acts as an exploratory research hoping to validate and *operationalise* promotion criteria for further model-building.

5.1 The Age Threshold within Levels or the Path's Time Factor

I previously engaged the argument regarding Party seniority as being of crucial importance to the rise to top Party positions. However, as demonstrated [Table 6], seniority alone is not sufficient to explain the selection and nomination processes inside the Party apparatus.

Furthermore, age, or rather, youth, alone is not sufficient to explain the top leadership selection process. Starting from Kou's idea regarding "sprinting with small steps" (2014), I have identified age thresholds within every level in order to demonstrate how the age factor matters. Each level's centre was identified and within level standard deviation was added to the centre afterwards as to form the cut-off threshold [Table 9].

These values were then used as a possible selection criteria considering that 81.73 per cent of the time (94 on 115 possible observations),[51] Politburo members, as a group, did indeed respect these thresholds on average 4 out of 5 times (i.e. from level 0 – entry – to Central Committee). If we were to push the analysis to encompass level 2, 78.26 per cent (108 out of 138 possible observations) of the Politburo members would still meet 5 out of 6 thresholds. More precisely, 5 out of 7 individuals in the Standing Committee respected this "4/5 rule"; 10 out of 16 non-standing members also did for a total of 15 on 23 (n=23) or 65.21 per cent.

As such age thresholds within a specific level become especially important for promotion. As we examine for the most part "sprinters" – individuals who completed all requirements and remained "promotable" until top national positions – the thresholds they set become, to a certain extent, a

Table 9 Age Threshold Data (*n1*)

	Level 1	*Level 2*	*CC*	*Level 3*	*Level 4*	*Level 5*	*Level 0*
Age entry (scope Min.Max)	52-67	49-66	42-62	38-59	30-47	28-46	18-35
Centre	59.5	57.5	52	48.5	38.5	36	26.5
Threshold (Centre + SD Average)	**64.5**	**62.5**	**57.0**	**53.5**	**43.5**	**41**	**31.5**
Standard Deviation	5.793	4.99	5.097	5.154	5.014	4.756	4.43
SD Average				5.0339			
Variance	33.55	24.9	25.98	26.56	25.146	22.617	19.652

"standard" to which others are held to. They express this idea that age matters but in relation to a specific leadership level: being off threshold too often could prevent an individual from ascending to the top of the Party apparatus as the latter became "terminable" (i.e. too old) while on the "path".

This also shows that it is not seniority, but rather the speed at which each level is completed prior to potentially failing to be promoted and being forced into retirement that matters. This implies, as previously mentioned, that age and the time spent inside the Party are not sufficient to explain promotion patterns. One needs to be promoted to a succession of positions (i.e. the step-by-step [Zeng, 2013; Kou and Tsai, 2014) in a timely manner in order to achieve seniority at higher hierarchical levels, thus having chances to ascend to top leadership positions.

Lastly, this notion of "sprinting", or rather the speed at which an individual must clear certain hierarchical levels while remaining "promotable" for further ascension, ties in with the previous discussion surrounding the role of factions as an intermediate variable. Accordingly, I posit that factions are what allows for an individual to complete the multiple levels in due time; it provides a "temporal" edge, or an early start for some Cadres and Officials. To this effect, factions are more of an enabling variable, or a "facilitator", rather than an independent variable in the leadership selection/nomination equation.

5.2 Provincial Experience: Where Does it Matter?

Provincial experience as a significant variable to take into account is not a novelty (Bo, 2014: 90), nor is the assumption that the East-Coast provinces are a recruitment ground for top leadership positions (Bo, 2007b; 2014). The demonstration I propose goes one step further than these "classical" analysis. First, I do concur with the importance of Provincial experience and also with the East-Coast region's relative influence in this matter. However, I will statistically demonstrate how much each region weighs in terms of relevance for selection within both the Standing Committee and the Politburo.

First, Provincial/Autonomous region/MDUCG experiences in the Politburo (n1) have been counted from level 5.[52] Disaggregated data (i.e. observation per province/autonomous region/MDUCG) have been reorganised following the four economic regions determined by the Central Government (Lien, 2012: 373):

1. Region 1 (Eastern) includes: Hebei, Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan and Shanghai;
2. Region 2 (Central) includes: Hunan, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangxi, Henan and Shanxi;
3. Region 3 (North-eastern) includes: Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning;

4. Region 4 (Western) includes: Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Chong-qing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Yunnan, Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu and Xinjiang.

Chi square tests[53] between both regions and specific positions have been used in order to prove whether or not the regions (i.e. 1 through 4) actually do matter when it comes to Elite selection and nomination. The original argument

Table 10 Regional Experience of Politburo Members, 2012

n1 (Politburo)	*Name*	*Number of experiences*	*Region*			
			1	*2*	*3*	*4*
1	Xi Jinping	3	3	0	0	0
2	Li Keqiang	2	0	1	1	0
3	Zhang Dejiang	4	2	0	1	1
4	Yu Zhengsheng	3	2	1	0	0
5	Liu Yunshan	1	0	0	0	1
6	Wang Qishan	3	3	0	0	0
7	Zhang Gaoli	3	3	0	0	0
Subtotal (Standing Committee)		**19**	**13**	**2**	**2**	**2**
8	Ma Kai	0	0	0	0	0
9	Wang Huning	0	0	0	0	0
10	Liu Yandong	0	0	0	0	0
11	Liu Qibao	3	0	1	0	2
12	Sun Chunlan	3	2	0	1	0
13	Sun Zhengcai	2	0	0	1	1
14	Li Jianguo	3	2	0	0	1
15	Li Yuanchao	1	1	0	0	0
16	Wang Yang	3	1	1	0	1
17	Zhang Chunxian	2	0	1	0	1
18	Meng Jianzhu	2	1	1	0	0
19	Zhao Leji	2	0	0	0	2
20	Hu Chunhua	3	1	0	0	2
21	Li Zhanshu	4	1	0	1	2
22	Guo Jinlong	4	1	1	0	2
23	Han Zheng	1	1	0	0	0
Subtotal (Politburo without Standing Committee)		**33**	**11**	**5**	**3**	**14**
Total (n=23)		**52**	**24**	**7**	**5**	**16**

Note: Miller provided a textual list of the Politburo members' provincial experiences (Miller, 2013). Bo Zhiyue also presented a detailed account of Provincial experiences of Provincial leaders (2007-2012) (2014: 78-83).[54]

(Bo, 2007b; 2014) states that provinces are a training ground for ascending Elites. However, all provinces are not equal in this process, nor are the regions in which they are located [Table 10].

The first impression shows that region 1 is significantly represented amongst the Standing Committee members as 5 out of 7 (71.43 per cent) individuals have experience in the latter. Of all those who have Provincial experience in the Politburo (*n*=20), 14 out of 20 individuals (70 per cent) have previously been assigned to region 1.

Furthermore, as Table 10 demonstrates, a single experience would not be sufficient for promotion and nomination. On average, members of the Sanding Committee have 2.7 Provincial experiences and non-standing members, 2.53. This brings the overall average – for those who had such backgrounds – to 2.6 Provincial experiences. Moreover, 85 per cent of members who have such experiences had at least 2 of them (*n*=20) or 73.9 per cent if we take into account all members (*n*=23).

I also further tested the relative importance of regions 1 and 4 with regards to regions 2 and 3 due to the former's observed importance in terms of occurrence in contrast to the latter.

In order to statistically determine the importance of each region, I performed an adjusted Chi Square test.[55] The result[56] of the testing allows us to posit the existence of distinction between the 4 regions in terms of importance for Elite selection. As such, region 1 contributes to 52.6 per cent of the Chi Square result's composition, compared to 46.2 per cent of the observed frequencies. Accordingly, "passing through" region 1 is an important dimension of top Elite formation. For example, almost 50 per cent of the individuals who have regional experiences had it in region 1 and 87.5 per cent of them have 3 or more experiences in the latter.

I provisionally posit that experience in region 1 aims at acquainting Cadres, Officials and higher leaders with China's main economic development engine: the East-Coast. It is important for future leaders to possess a

Table 11 Experiences Threshold (Politburo)

Number of Provincial Experience	Regions				Total
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	
1	2	0	0	1	**3**
2	1	3	2	4	**10**
3	17	3	1	6	**27**
4	4	1	2	5	**12**
Total	**24**	**7**	**5**	**16**	**52**

strong sense of both Chinese economic and urban development. Furthermore, it is important for them to understand the significance of region 1's rising issues (e.g. real-estate bubble, economic slowdown and its consequences, etc.). On the other hand, experience in region 4 possibly addresses the Party awareness of very urgent remaining and ongoing problems in the Western region (e.g. poverty, underdevelopment, lack of public goods' provision, ethnic tensions, etc.) all potentially leading to social unrest. To a certain extent, this explanation is based on Zhao Suisheng's reflection regarding Elites' backgrounds during the 15th and 16th Party Congress's turnover (2004: 58).

5.3 Provincial-Autonomous Region-Municipalities Party Secretary or the Key Position

The selection of the Provincial Party Secretary position is not specific to this article. Other authors have put forward the importance of this specific position (Bo, 2003, 2014; Huang, 2012).[57]

As Table 11 illustrates, not only are Provincial experiences relevant, but certain types of positions are favoured at the expense of others. As such, Vice-Party Secretary and Provincial Party Secretary type positions [Annex A: List 1] (i.e. Party positions) are preferred to Government positions of the same hierarchical level (i.e. in this case level 4 and level 3).

This observation reinforces previously made assumptions regarding the Provincial Party Secretary position's importance by calculating its occurrence amongst the Politburo members. In the case of the Standing Committee, 7 out of 7 individuals have occupied the Provincial Vice-Party Secretary type position and 6 out of 7 [except: Liu Yunshan] occupied the Provincial level

Table 12 Modal Occupations (Politburo)

Group	Vice-Governor type position	Provincial Vice-Party Secretary type position	Provincial Governor type position	Provincial Party Secretary position type
Standing Committee (*n*=7)	43%	**100%**	57%	**86%**
Politburo Members (without the Standing Committee [*n*=16])	38%	**69%**	31%	**81%**
Politburo (*n*=23)	39%	**78%**	39%	**83%**

Source: The author's database.

Party Secretary position type. To this effect, percentages do not accurately reflect the importance of the latter for the Politburo Standing Committee.

When looking at the Politburo non-standing members (*n*=16), we can see that 11 out of 16 have occupied the Provincial Vice-Party Secretary type position and 13 out of 16, the Provincial Party Secretary type position [Table 12]. Overall, 18 out of 23 have occupied the former, and 19 out of 23 the latter, making these positions the two greatest common occurrence in terms of occupation inside the Politburo (*n*=23). On the other hand, only 9 out of 23 individuals have occupied both Vice-Governor and Provincial Governor type positions, thus underlining their more "unnecessary" nature.

That being said, having these specific positions in of itself is insufficient for promotion/selection to top leadership positions. Where these positions were occupied also greatly matters [Table 13].

Table 13 highlights the clear importance of both (1) position types and (2) regions in which these positions are required.

Accordingly, position 6 (Provincial Party Secretary position type) in region 1 (East Coast) is the most commonly observed occurrence, closely followed by position 6 in region 4 (West China).

When looking at the Standing Committee, 50 per cent of the Party Secretary type positions were held in region 1 and when observing the Politburo (*n*=23), this slowly drops to 41 per cent. However, when compared to other regions' position 6 inside the Politburo (*n*=23) (i.e. region 2 with 19 per cent, region 3 with 9 per cent and region 4 with 31 per cent), it remains the preponderant region.

If we were to combine both positions 4 (Provincial Vice-Party Secretary type position) and 6, percentages would remain very similar: 52.9 per cent for the Standing Committee and 44.23 per cent for all of the Politburo.

Table 13 Positions per Regions

Position#	Region 1						Region 2						Region 3						Region 4					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
Group Standing Committee (*n*=7)	2	2	3	4	3	5	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1
Non-standing members (*n*=16)	2	3	2	6	3	8	2	0	1	1	0	4	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	2	2	5	1	9
Total (*n*=23)	4	5	5	10	6	13	2	0	1	2	1	6	0	1	1	3	1	3	0	3	2	6	1	10

Source: Author's database.

In terms of individuals, 5 out of 7 Standing Committee members had a Party Secretary type position in region 1 (71.4 per cent) and overall, 13 out of 23 Politburo members (56.52 per cent).

Lastly, Table 13 shows something more interesting regarding regions 2 and 3. Simply in terms of mere importance, both regions combined only makes for 24.41 per cent of all the positions (21 out of 86 observations). On the other hand, region 1 makes for 50 per cent of all positions while region 4, 22 per cent. This underlines, to a certain extent, the "insignificant" or inconsequential nature of both regions for the "path" leading to top leadership positions: regions 2 and 3 are not training nor recruiting grounds for Politburo membership.

5.4 Non-conclusive Factors: Testing for Relevance

During the database's constitution and assembly,[58] I included and tested several more variables in regards to their possible relevance for leadership selection. Of all the tested ones, we shall retain four.

5.4.1 h_1: Business Experience (above General Manager [zong jingli, 总经理]) is of Relevance for Leadership Promotion

Despite being interesting in of itself, the "business" argument, which refers to the diversification of higher Elites' composition, does not stand under scrutiny. I decided to start counting from the General Manager position as it indicates seniority and does, depending on the enterprise's level (*danwei jibie*, 单位级别) (e.g. a Centrally Owned Enterprise [中央企业], a National Group [*Zhongguo jituan gongsi*, 中国集团公司], etc.) equated to a formal mid-range position in the hierarchical structure [Annex A: List 1] (*zhengxing jibie*, 政行级别).

Out of all the Politburo members (*n*=23), only 1 had risen high enough in an enterprise to actually be considered as coming from the "business sector". This individual is Zhang Chunxian.

5.4.2 h_2: Experience in One of the 4 Central Party Departments (i.e. Organisation [Zhongyang zuzhi bu buzhang, 中央组织部部长], Propaganda [Zhongyang xuan bu buzhang, 中央宣部部长], United Front [Zhongyang tongzhang bu buzhang, 中央统战部部长] and Central Party School [Zhongyang dangxiao xiaozhang, 中央党校校长]) is of Importance for Leadership Promotion

These positions were selected because of their importance as high profile Party positions (正部级) and only the head of departments counted as

simply "being part of" a department/ministry has sometimes little relevance for an individual's pedigree. Furthermore, including all positions of these departments would be too encompassing, thus not saying much on the specific positions themselves rather than the whole departmental section.

As observed, the Organisation Department, the Propaganda Department and the United Front Department are all represented amongst Politburo members (n=23). However, they form respectively 9 per cent each – 2 individuals out of 23. When adding the Central Deputy-Head into the count, results slightly tilt up to 3 individuals for the Propaganda Department and 3 for the United Front (13 per cent).

Even when pushing further by including the departments' Provincial-level Directors in the calculations, results still remain non-significant with the Propaganda Department "rising" to 4 individuals out of 23 or 17 per cent.

5.4.3 h_3: Experience as Head Mishu (Mishu zhang, 秘书长) for Either the City-level or Provincial-level Government Matters for Leadership Promotion

Provincial Head Mishu (*Sheng wei mishu zhang*, 省委秘书长) or Secretary position is sometimes seen as an "expedient"[59] position from level 5 positions to either level 4 or sometimes level 3 (e.g. Governor, etc.) as it allows a shortcut of having to occupy a more "formal" level 5 position (e.g. Prefecture-level city Mayor, etc.). However when looking at the Politburo, none had this experience. Same goes for the Prefecture-level head Mishu.

5.4.4 h_4: Provenance of Leaders, in Terms of Region, is of Importance for Leadership Promotion

Although not assessed as a variable in terms of promotion *per se*, regional or sometimes provincial provenance is often part of top leadership presentation work.[60]

When closely looking at top elites' regional provenance, 56.5 per cent of the Politburo members are from region 1 with region 2 following at 30 per cent. More specifically, the 4 direct neighbouring provinces of Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang form 43 per cent (10 out of 23 individuals) of the Politburo.

Even if we were to combined region 2, 3 and 4, we arrive at 43.4 per cent. The least represented region is the number 3 with only 1 individual coming from Liaoning.

This shows the advantage individuals born in region 1 possess over others. However, I do not believe this qualifies as a promotion criteria rather being again an "enabling" factor: east coasters have access to better

universities and more opportunities to either enter the Party or enter local public function.

5.5 Remarks

Despite these variables being arbitrary, they have been tested as to see their possible impact on leadership selection. However as explained, they have either very little or no explanatory value regarding an individual's chances of being selected to the Politburo.

   The objective of this short section was to underline the limited influence of some possibly "interesting" variables that might appeal to some when it comes to explaining Elite formation and top leadership selection in China.

6. Finding the Successors: Knowing Where and What to Look For

The following summarises the results of the previously made analysis. These criteria concur with Putnam's assumption regarding the idea of a set of common occupation shared amongst the top Elites. As such, this exhaustive list brings in all the most recurring criteria within the Politburo (*n*=23) and the Standing Committee members (*n*=7). Some results were previously calculated and presented on *n*=20 (e.g. when sometimes excluding individuals with no regional experiences). However, I decided to keep a more conservative stance and present this final account based on *n*=23 for the sake of statistical accuracy.

   For the Politburo (*n*=23):

1.   Being part of the Central Committee (100 per cent [23/23]);
2.   Having occupied a Provincial Party Secretary type position (82.6 per cent [19/23]);
3.   Having had at least 2 provincial experiences (73.9 per cent [17/23]);
4.   Completed 4 out of the 5 thresholds age level as to remain promotable (65.21 per cent [15/23]);
5.   Having been positioned in region 1 at least once (60 per cent [14/23]);
6.   Having occupied a Provincial Party Secretary type position in region 1 (56.52 per cent [13/23]).

   For the Standing Committee (*n*=7), rules, although the same, are more concentrated:

1.   Being part of the Central Committee (100 per cent [7/7]);
2.   Having occupied a Provincial Party Secretary type position (85.7 per cent [6/7]);
3.   Having had at least 2 provincial experiences (85.7 per cent [6/7]);

4. Having been positioned in region 1 at least once (71.4 per cent [5/7])
5. Having occupied a Provincial Party Secretary type position in region 1 (71.4 per cent [5/7]);
6. Completed 4 out of 5 thresholds age level (71.4 per cent [5/7]).

These criteria do represent a growing trend for political Elite formation at the top of the Party-State apparatus. We can clearly see the importance of a specific type of experience, of a certain number of regional experiences and a clear preferences for the region 1.

Although not complete, this list can help us "refine" and guide our search for individuals that are to be promoted to the Politburo. Yet, these criteria are not infallible.

As the second elements suggest, the Provincial Party Secretary type position mainly matters to individuals who followed the "*Kuai*" (Politicrats) path. Accordingly, the 2nd path, which does not include the previously mentioned position type still accounts for 17.39 per cent of the appointments [4/23]. To this effect, this "second group of leaders" answers to a different promotion/selection pattern.

7. Conclusion

How are top leaders selected in communist China? By emphasising several key variables and performing multiple tests and calculations, I demonstrated that (1) patterns regarding Elite selection inside the Party exist; (2) the main pattern is a specific mix of Party positions (e.g. PSP), minimal regional experiences (e.g. regions 1 and 4) combined with an age threshold in order to achieve seniority at a precise moment to remain "promotable" within the Party-State apparatus.[61] Furthermore, I have identified and described what is presumed to be the optimal "path to the top". However, other "paths" exist and answer to different selection and nomination logics.

To begin with, I briefly discussed the factionalist approach as it is still widely used in the current literature regarding Elite formation, recruitment and leadership change. Despite certain underlined shortcomings, factions will play a role in leadership selection for the foreseeable future, and as such, discussion regarding institutionalisation should be seen as completing or being completed by factionalism.

Furthermore, I engaged in leadership institutionalisation research in order to verify some of their claims regarding key variables explaining career patterns, Elite recruitment and nomination. As shown, Party seniority and education backgrounds are no longer distinctive elements parting Politicrats from Administrators. Instead, seniority is important when measured throughout the "path": one needs to be a specific age at a specific rank/position in order to

remain "promotable"[62]. Time in the Party itself is insufficient and political loyalty is empirically very difficult to measure.

As I have tried to demonstrate, the institutionalisation of and within the Party-State apparatus has over time created rules regarding Elite selection, nomination and promotion which we are now attempting to understand in order to better grasp the complexity of Chinese politics. This enterprise identifying the rules is mainly what I have tentatively tried to do.

However rigorous the observation and methods used to process information and deliver these results may be, I am not and cannot claim to have provided a fully satisfactory answer to the initial research question for two reasons: (1) the "path" we tried to unfold concerns Politicrats or "*Kuai*", again leaving out 17.39 per cent of the Elite selection, which is by our standards still considered to be a high error margin; (2) however interesting the arguments may be, it focuses solely on the formal side of Chinese politics leaving out informal manoeuvres (i.e. factions) and already-made arrangements (e.g. bargaining and consensus).

This study provided modest insights regarding leadership selection in China. By way of its non-traditional argumentative structure, it challenged certain elements (e.g. seniority, Party rejuvenation), corroborated and clarified some others (e.g. Provincial experience in terms of location – region – and position) and laid down new ones (e.g. age threshold) in order to better understand leadership selection in the People's Republic.

Notwithstanding this demonstration, it is unclear to what extent these rules will continue to develop in contrast with informal politics.[63] Just like Zang Xiaowei and Zhou Xueguang, I have tried to depict the existence of the "routinisation" of institutional constraints on Elite formation inside the Party-State. As such, claims regarding the unchanging nature of the CCP seem implausible considering the importance vested in rules, career patterns and regulation of personnel appointment in the People's Republic.

Annex A: Data Sets, Specifics and Categorisation

1. Data Sets

The selected population has been stratified into three groups: (1) the Politburo [PB]; (2) the members of the Central Committee [CC], and (3) individuals who have a membership in the Central Committee [CC] and occupy a Provincial Party Secretary position [PSP].

The first group is composed of 25 members of which two individuals from the military structure were removed ($n1$=23). The Military was not taken into account for two reasons: (1) their ranking structure is completely different

Table A Population Specifics

	Original	*Excluded Military*	*Excluded Incomplete Information*	*Excluded Overlap*	*Result*	*Acronym*
Politburo	25	2	0	0	23	*n*1
Central Committee	205	40	6	25	134	*n*2

from that of the Party, and (2) they are not the ones "governing" China. Their exclusion, however, does not undermine the validity of the current study. The Military members are important political actors in China yet they are subordinated to the Party and State structure.

The second group (*n*2) is comprised of the 205 members of the Central Committee. Just like the first group, Military positions were removed (40/205). Furthermore, the 25 members of the Politburo overlapping with the Central Committee have been sided with the former. Wang Xinxian (王新宪) and Song Dahan (宋大涵) had to be removed as dates for both level 3 and 4 positions [List 1] were not found. These are the only cases I could not insert into the database. Wang is the vice-chairman of China's Disabled Persons Federation and Song was Peng Zhen's, one of the "Eight Immortals of the Party", secretary.

Time of entry in the Party of Lin Jun (林军), Geng Huicheng (耿惠昌) and Jia Ting'an (贾廷安) as well as the level 5 positions [List 1] of both Wang Anshun and Lin Jun were also missing. These removals bring the second group's total population down to 134 (*n*2=134). Central Committee's alternate members were not taken into account because they have not been promoted to full Central Committee membership, a requirement to be considered "promotable" to higher positions.

1.1 Specifics of Each Group

For the first group, all the members of the Politburo were selected with the exception of the two Military members. This selection method is widely used in the literature in order to analyse China's top leadership (Bo, 2007a, 2009; Lam, 2006, 2007; Miller, 2011; Wang, 2006). It is important to note that most of the authors do not exclusively focus on the Politburo and its Standing Committee. Nonetheless, these two groups remain at the forefront of political Elite analysis in the field of Chinese politics.

The second group has been selected following the ranking structure of the State/Party apparatus in China. The levels of leadership position

(*lingdaozhiwu cengci fenwei*, 领导职务层次分为), or the ranking structure, is an official detailed list that can easily be obtained through various sources (Gao and Luo, 2005: 53). As such, Central Committee members were selected because their position is the modal occupation (100 percent), or the greatest common occurrence (GCO) amongst Politburo (n1) members.

List 1 Position Listing

Number	Examples
1	Prefecture-level City Mayor Sub provincial-level City-Vice-Mayor Central Municipalities District Head Sub provincial-level District deputy-head Sub provincial-level autonomous area deputy-governor
2	Prefecture-level city Party Secretary Sub provincial-level City Party deputy Secretary Central Municipalities District Party Secretary Sub provincial-level District Party deputy Secretary Sub provincial-level autonomous area deputy-Party Secretary
3	Provincial Vice-Governor Autonomous Region Vice-Chairman Central Municipalities Vice-Mayor Provincial/Central Municipality/Autonomous region standing committee Sub provincial-level cities Mayor Sub national-level district head Sub national-autonomous region Governor
4	Provincial Vice-Party Secretary Autonomous Region Vice-Party Secretary Central Municipalities Vice-Party Secretary Sub provincial-level cities Party Secretary Sub provincial-level district Party Secretary Sub national-autonomous region Party Secretary
5	Provincial Governor Autonomous region Chairman Central Municipalities Mayor
6	Provincial Party Secretary Autonomous region Party Secretary Central Municipalities Party Secretary

1.2 Categorisation

In order to find and fill in all the required names for our first and second groups ($n1 + n2 = 157$), official name lists of both the Politburo and Central Committee were used. These lists are official information and public records.

The respective backgrounds of Party members were organised according to their previously occupied positions and were structured in compliance with the official ranking list. This allowed for the reconstruction of their career history. Provincial experiences [List 1] down to the level 5, the Office/Bureau principal position [Table 2] were also assessed. I chose to stop at level 5 as there were no more GCD past this point. As depicted by Diagram 1, path shaping starts either at this point or possibly after (e.g. level 4). Finally, the age at which individuals were nominated to a specific position until level 5 was also considered as a primary variable.

Categorisation has been independently done by the author and one outside reviewer. We obtained an inter-annotator agreement of κ=0.93. Furthermore, the number of total observations vary since some individuals have occupied more than one position at one given level while others may have skipped an entire level. Two other individuals (i.e. retired Cadres who used to take part in personnel evaluation) were later asked to evaluate the data only to confirm its congruence with the *kappa*.

The data used to create occupation lists came from three sources: (1) China Party and Government Leaders database (*CPC News*, 2014); (2) *China Vitae* (2014) and (3), although sometimes regarded as unreliable, *Baike Baidu*. The latter had up-to-date and detailed account of every individual's background and has previously been used by scholars such as Bo Zhiyue (2014).
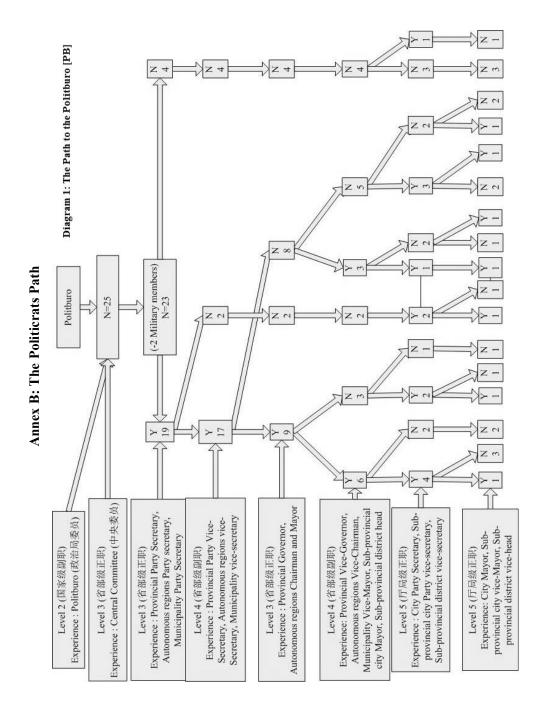
1.3 Remarks

The data being used, last verified in March 2015, does not take into account current/future arrangements made behind closed doors of the top leadership structure regarding the 2017 reshuffling. Furthermore, there exists a certain inequality in terms of relative importance of certain provinces as opposed to some others (e.g. Guangdong's PSP will informally rank higher than the PSP from Jilin). However, to my knowledge, there is no formal list outlining provincial hierarchy in China. Accordingly, this specific variation is not included in the analysis. Factional ties and the informal importance of a position, in contrast to its formal "weight" inside the official ranking structure, were also not taken into account. Attempting to measure the informal "pull" of every position would be impractical and almost unfeasible. Lastly, much of these limitations have already been underlined by Shih *et al.* (2012).

Annex B: The Politicrats Path

Diagram 1: The Path to the Politburo [PB]

Politburo → N=25 → (-2 Military members) N=23

Flow nodes: N 4 → N 4 → N 4 → N 4 → Y 1 → N 1; N 4 → N 3 → N 3

N 8 → N 5 → N 2 / Y 1 → N 2; N 5 → Y 3 → N 2; Y 3 → Y 1 → Y 1 → N 1 / Y 1; Y 2 → N 1 / Y 1

N 2 → N 2 → N 2 → Y 2

Y 19 → Y 17 → Y 9 → N 3 → N 1 / Y 2 → N 1 / Y 1

Y 9 → Y 6 → N 2 → N 2; Y 6 → Y 4 → Y 1 → N 3

Level 2 (国家级副职)
Experience : Politburo (政治局委员)

Level 3 (省部级正职)
Experience : Central Committee (中央委员)

Level 3 (省部级正职)
Experience : Provincial Party Secretary, Autonomous regions Party secretary, Municipality Party Secretary

Level 4 (省部级副职)
Experience : Provincial Party Vice-Secretary, Autonomous regions vice-Secretary, Municipality vice-secretary

Level 3 (省部级正职)
Experience : Provincial Governor, Autonomous regions Chairman and Mayor

Level 4 (省部级副职)
Experience: Provincial Vice-Governor, Autonomous regions Vice-Chairman, Municipality Vice-Mayor, Sub-provincial city Mayor, Sub-provincial district head

Level 5 (厅局级正职)
Experience : City Party Secretary, Sub-provincial city Party vice-secretary, Sub-provincial district vice-secretary

Level 5 (厅局级正职)
Experience: City Mayor, Sub-provincial city vice-Mayor, Sub-provincial district vice-head

Annex C: Tests

Test: Unilateral *t*-tests [Appointed Individuals to the Politburo, 1987-2012]

Period	Signification
1987-1992	P< .231 (n.s)
1992-1997	P< .308 (n.s)
1997-2002	P< .031 (s)
2002-2007	P< .362 (n.s)
2007-2012	P< .231 (n.s)
1987-1997	P< .332 (n.s)
1992-2002	P< .130 (n.s)
1997-2007	P< .141 (n.s)
2002-2012	P< .358 (n.s)

Notes

+   The author would like to acknowledge the important contribution of Mr. Bruno Marien, Adjunct Professor in Statistics and Methodology in the Political Science department at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) and former Statistics Canada employee for all calculations and data presentation. I also wish to acknowledge the work of my research assistant Sun Guorui 孙国睿 [MSc Candidate at London School of Economics] for data collection and analysis and for his extensive work during the editing parts.

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1.   On the other hand, some scholars, like Fewsmith (2013), Shirk (2002) and Zheng and Lye (2003) have argued that transitions have become less institutionalised. Shirk and Zheng and Lye's articles, however, could not stand the test of time as their analysis relied on Jiang Zemin not stepping down.

2.   I use the *pinyin* system and simplified characters according to current standards in Mainland China. Furthermore, to avoid confusion, I have decided to keep the customary rendering of Chinese names (i.e. family name, first name).

3.   The term "institution" refers to "formal institution" as the latter can also be informal (e.g. patronage, customs, etc.). This clarification is of the utmost importance for the understanding of this article.

4.   The structure I lay here does not follow the traditional one (i.e. theory, hypothesis, data, model, and discussion). However, considering the "unorthodox" way by which data is analysed and interpreted, I believe the usage of a different structure is appropriate.

5. Li Cheng, maybe one of the most productive authors on factions through the *Chinese Leadership Monitor*, has too many publications on the subject matter for us to cite them all.

6. This specific faction is, at times, region-centred, leader-centred or lineage-centred.

7. Zeng Jinghan also underlines these difficulties, especially identifying who belongs to which faction (2013: 234) and actually proves that other factors (e.g. the age factor) are of greater importance when looking at leadership transition.

8. Zeng Jinghan (2013) has been critical of this notion and argues for the usage of the terms "patronage" or "patron-client ties".

9. They both come from high-ranked communist families.

10. They both lived in Shanghai while their families worked there. However, Liu is said to have stronger ties to Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong than Li.

11. They both served in the CYCL structure in the early 1980s to early 1990s under Hu Jintao.

12. Yao Yilin (1917-1994) is a former First Vice Premier (1988-1993) and member of the Politburo.

13. Mayor of Shanghai, close to Jiang Zemin, Han is also said to be close to Hu Jintao (Lam, 2007: 42).

14. Shih *et al*. (2012) already demonstrated this point using a cohesive index. Bo (2010: 136) also discusses the cohesion index for the Shanghai Gang.

15. This ranked as Provincial/Ministerial Main Position [Table 2].

16. Liu Qibao, Hu Chunhua, Li Zhanshu and Han Zheng.

17. Li Keqiang and Hu Chunhua.

18. This in part explains the friction between the members of the two Shanghai Gangs coexisting under Jiang Zemin (e.g. between Zeng Qinghong [part of the Shanghai Lineage] and Chen Liangyu [brought by Jiang]).

19. Defined as the formal distribution of capabilities (e.g. domains of governance) amongst actors in the political system (Waltz, 1979: 82), it is seen by Zang as part of the self-regulation/adaptive mechanism of the Party-State (2004: 14).

20. This notion is not clearly defined by either Zhou and Zang (e.g. "activism in class struggle").

21. Zang concurs that career advancement in the Party follows almost the same criteria as those of the 1980s (2004: 90). I disagree with Zang's statement since, as Zhou (1995) puts it, rules and norms of recruitment are subject to change according to the needs of the Party-State. "Ideological sophistication in Marxism", seniority, loyalty and family background are now insufficient to explain Politicrats recruitment logic.

22. *Tiao/Kuai* is being used to describe the dual leadership relationship between regional units, *Kuai* (e.g. provincial government, city government, etc.) and functional administrative units, *Tiao* (e.g. a ministry, bureau, office, etc.). For a more detailed view of how *Tiao/Kuai* works see Payette and Mascotto (2011).

23. This criterion has been a formal rule since 2002. See Chapter 11, article 55 of the Party Cadres selection guide (CCP, 2002: 29).

24. Nonetheless, the system's capability to pressure top leaders into retirement is still very limited.

25. As for the Presidency of the Central Military Commission, this rule did not seem to apply until Hu Jintao, in 2012, handed over both the CCP's Presidency and the Central Military Commission to Xi Jinping.

26. These retirement rules regarding civil servants (*gongwuyuan*, 公务员) have been in place since 1982 (Fan, 2012).

27. According to the 1982 regulations (still unchanged), all other Cadres must leave at 60 (male) or at 55 (female). Also, all the listed cut-off ages for promotion were confirmed by Kou and Tsai (2014: 157).

28. To name a just a few.

29. Table 4 differs as it does a precise stratification of the Central Committee and the Politburo in order to discuss the seniority element.

30. This rule still holds for all the current Central Committee members (*n*=205). The average age of nomination for the 205 members (including military members [42], *n*1 [23] and other previously excluded members [6]) is 56.307 years old, with a variance of 17.537 and standard deviation of 4.1877. If using Table 5 to replicate the findings, the overall average, by using class centres, is 56.2048 years old.

31. If they reach a position's age limit without having reached retirement age, Cadres will be pushed to semi-retirement positions (e.g. County National People's Congress [NPC] or Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference [CPPCC]) (Yang, 2003: 113).

32. When looking at the Politburo (*n*1), we are more able to understand Yang's point. The Politburo's members had an average age of 37.3478 years old at level 5 [Table 2], which is two steps above the County level.

33. For precision purposes, we have included members of the military structure in these calculations.

34. $y_t = a + b(x)$

35. $y_t = 62.33755 + -0.62406(3.5)$

36. $y = -0.6241x + 64.522$

37. $r = 0.8063 P < .05$

38. $t_{a/2}(35)1.5 n.s (0.10)$

39. $t_{a/2}(35)1.509 ns (0.10)$

40. $t_{a/2}(47) -0.362 n.s. (0.10)$

41. $t_{a/2}(48)0.4468 n.s (0.10)$

42. Zhou uses three data sets of which two are not major Party reshuffling time (1965 – 1978). Zang's second dataset (1994) is taken two years after the 1992 Party Congress. Party Congresses are major turnover events during which the aspect of the Central Committee and of the Politburo can be altered. This in turn explains why I have focused on the18th Party Congress.

43. The two missing values are those of Wang Guangya and Liu He.

44. When re-segmenting according to disaggregated data.

45. Cumulative frequency of [1964-1978] shows that 74 per cent of the observations of *n*1 and 71 per cent of *n*2 fall within this category with an average difference of 1.75 years of seniority (*n*1 = 40.12 / *n*2 = 38.37).

46. The four components are, in respect to Cadres appointments, (1) more revolutionary (e.g. purge of people associated with the Gang of Four and the

Cultural Revolution); (2) intellectualisation; (3) more professional, and (4) rejuvenation.

47. The data used to compute these percentages are public records. Furthermore, the percentages take into account diplomas delivered by the Central Party School.

48. The data used to compute these percentages are public records.

49. Regardless of the division of labour between "Politicrats" and administrators, it would be interesting to investigate the path followed by the latter as to see if this division is as prevalent as we think. Considering the increasing use of "sponsored mobility" by the Party (Walder, 2004; Walder and Li, 2001), we could tentatively posit that both ministers and central bureau directors, or "higher administrators", could be progressively converging toward a more "political" path (i.e. cumulating more "*Kuai*" positions) as to tie the gap between the local policy environment and the central policymaking process.

50. Bo's dismissal was not only tied to formal investigation procedures.

51. 5 levels of leadership multiplied by 23 individuals or 115 possible observations.

52. Provincial/Autonomous region/MDUCG standing committee's position have also been counted as such.

53. Chi square adjustment test.

54. The presentation of Provincial experiences differs from my counterparts as it enumerates and categorises (according to defined regions) Provincial experiences from all members of the Politburo (2012) starting at level 5 [Table 2] in order to examine the relative importance of each region.

55. Very useful for smaller samples, Adjusted Chi Square tests allows us to accept the Null hypothesis and assume, from the get going, that there are no statistical difference between regions.

56. $\chi^2(3)17.68P < .001$

57. The Provincial Party Secretary and its role in the current state of Chinese authoritarianism ought to be examined in more detail as the latter, considering the "one government, two courts" principle (*yi fu, liang yuan*), is self-supervised (i.e. overlap between the People's Congress director and Party Secretary) and also responsible for sub-national policy implementation. As such, the Party Secretary is a "strategic position" in the authoritarian structure because the Centre relies on them and cannot really afford to supervise them, giving the latter significant leverage and bargaining capabilities. Lastly, this inquiry might shed more light into the future of Central-Local relations.

58. All the results have been obtained through public records and information allowing for easy replicability.

59. Although the main argument revolves around personal Mishu (Li, 2001), Mishu positions – in the formal civilian structure – has been known to bridge certain information gaps inside the Party-State apparatus (Li, 1994).

60. We can think of works made by Bo Zhiyue, Li Cheng and Alice Miller, to name just a few.

61. These identified criteria will constitute what I earlier called the "priors" for further modelling and iteration of which I am currently working on.

62. This is maybe why, according to Huang (2013b) the Party starts selecting "promising" Cadres early on.

63. Uncertain regarding the future applicability of these rules, the latter, both when counting the overlap and not, work when tested on both the 16th and 17th Politburo members. However, considering space constraints, presentation of the data and results are not possible in this article.

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The Dynamics of Mainstream and Internet Alternative Media in Hong Kong: A Case Study of the Umbrella Movement[+]

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Abstract

Existing literatures recognise the Chinese government's intention since the handover was to assert political control over Hong Kong's mainstream media by enforcing self-censorship. This is evident by the way politically sensitive news were dealt with, which directly or indirectly relate to the interests of China. Since late September 2014, the Umbrella Movement (or Umbrella Revolution) has become a delicate issue in both China and Hong Kong. For locals, this movement was a student-led campaign to champion universal suffrage without unreasonable political screening; however, Beijing considered the campaign a threat to its authority. So, how did Hong Kong media respond to this political conundrum? This study found that most mainstream media organisations took an anti-movement stance and practise self-censorship so as not to offend the Chinese government. For this reason many Hong Kong people became dissatisfied and turn to the Internet to criticise mainstream media and to support the Umbrella Movement. Overall, online media have created an alternative political space attracting critically minded and democratic-oriented Hong Kong citizens.

Keywords: *the Umbrella Movement, media self-censorship, Internet alternative media, mainstream media, Hong Kong and China*

1. Introduction

Existing literatures recognise that the Chinese government has been attempting to control Hong Kong media through inducing media self-censorship since the 1997 handover, which is seen as a threat to press freedom (Lee and Lin, 2006; Ma, 2007). A survey in 2014 showed that 49.1 per cent of citizens believed the Hong Kong media practised self-censorship (HKUPOP,

2014a) and 56.7 per cent believed the media had reservations about criticising the Chinese government (HKUPOP, 2014b). The problem of media self-censorship is especially evident in relation to politically sensitive news topics. These include Taiwan independence, commemoration of the Tiananmen incident, and the legal status of the Falun Gong in Hong Kong, because they either directly or indirectly challenge the legitimacy and authority of Beijing (Lee and Chan, 2009). Thus, media treatments of these topics are also what most academics and commentators make reference to when evaluating media self-censorship (Cheung, 2003; Fung, 2007). Given this situation, a series of academic works have found that most mainstream media organisations tend to avoid these sensitive matters or use alternative means (inviting external commentaries or employing foreign media reports) to handle these issues in order not to provoke the Chinese leaders (Lee, 2000; 2007).

Since September 2014, the Umbrella Movement has become another politically sensitive topic. It used blocking of main roads as a protest strategy, urging the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) to retract the framework of the Chief Executive Election method in 2017, and calling for more democracy in Hong Kong. In local eyes, the movement was mainly led by university and secondary school students to fight for a Chief Executive Election without "unreasonable political screening". However, in Beijing's assessment, this movement was a challenge to its authority. Some argued this campaign was a "colour revolution", funded by Western governments, in an attempt to overthrow the Chinese regime in Hong Kong. A number of pro-China media even declared this movement is in fact fighting for "the independence of Hong Kong". It is under this circumstance that news of the Umbrella Movement was intentionally filtered or blocked on the mainland. So, how have mainstream and Internet alternative media in Hong Kong responded to this politically sensitive topic?

By examining the case study of the Umbrella Movement, this article argues that most mainstream media organisations took an anti-movement stance and continuously practised self-censorship whereas an increasing number of Hong Kong people criticised their performance and paid more attention to the Internet alternative media, mostly offering pro-movement information. Thus, the circulation of Internet news expanded alarmingly during the movement.

2. Theoretical Review: The Dynamics of Mainstream and Internet Alternative Media

In the field of media studies, the dynamic between mainstream and Internet alternative media has developed into an important theoretical perspective. By definition, "Internet alternative media" refers to media organisations with their

own news reporting team (e.g. editors and journalists) and news reports which mainly rely on the Internet (e.g. Facebook or webpage, etc.) for message delivery (Morone, 2013) while "mainstream media" refers to the traditional media organisations (e.g. TV, newspaper and radio, etc.) that capture the attention of the majority of society and hold the symbolic power to present and define "social reality" (Couldry, 2000). With the Internet having become popular in recent decades, the production and distribution cost for operating alternative media organisations has decreased, thus facilitating people's participation in coproduction of alternative media content and reaching a wide audience. More importantly, Internet alternative media provide more options to audience instead of only relying on traditional media (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008). Correspondingly, there are increasing numbers of studies which are interested in the overall impact of online alternative media usage on mainstream media.

Some studies adopt an "inclusive approach" and argue that Internet alternative media can facilitate the activation and expression of viewpoints which are excluded from mainstream media (Bareiss, 2001; Dahlberg, 2007; Kenix, 2011). They believe mainstream media may ignore voices of the marginal or minority groups (e.g. animal rights, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) or ethnic minority issues) while the Internet offers an "alternative public realm" (Downing 1988) which reinforces the views of the "particular interpretative communities" (Manning, 2001, p. 226). The ultimate aim of Internet alternative media is to supplement mainstream media by offering more angles to explain issues. Hájeka and Carpentier (2015), for instance, applied the case of the Czech Republic and argued that the existence of online alternative media helps in the promotion of media diversity.

However, some other studies take an "exclusive approach" and argue that Internet alternative media aim to challenge the "hegemonic power" of mainstream media (Couldry and Curran, 2003). Mainstream media have long been criticised for being too pro-establishment (Boykoff, 2006) which reflects the conservative values (McChesney, 2000) and defends the interests of authority (Coyer, Dowmunt and Fountain, 2007). But, it captures the attention of the social majority and frames "social reality". As mainstream media organisations tend to rely on advertisements from private companies and official information sources for funding, the phenomenon of "selective exposure" becomes common, especially for sensitively political issues, in order not to offend the power holders such as the government and major business corporations (Stround, 2008). As a result, it creates a sense of media scepticism, which refers to the public perception that media organisations are not objective in their reporting and sacrifice their professionals for personal gains (Kohring and Matthes, 2007). Tsfati and Cappella (2003) found that intense scepticism and erosion of trust in mainstream media could contribute

to Internet alternative media usage. Currently, this school of thought has further developed into two aspects to examine this argument.

The first is an audience perspective. Tsfati (2010), for instance, conducted a quantitative survey regarding the case of the United States and found that Americans who trust the media read more mainstream news whereas those who mistrust mainstream media read more news information from the Internet. Studies of the Internet have also covered Hong Kong. Leung and Lee (2014) found that Hong Kong people who perceive media self-censorship as a series problem are more likely to be Internet alternative media users.

The second is a content-provider perspective. Larsson (2014) conducted a qualitative interview study in Sweden and argued that many Internet alternative media producers and citizen opinion writers started or participate in online media organisations due to the dissatisfaction with mainstream media. The findings show that many expressed counter-hegemonic ideas and oppose the dominant ideas of media and politics. In light of the rapid increase of Internet alternative media usage during the Umbrella Movement, this paper also applies the content-provider angle to validate this theory.

3. Research Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. In order to evaluate the performance of mainstream media, content analysis and case study were adopted. Seventeen newspapers were selected due to their significance in the media scene in Hong Kong to analyse their political positions from headline stories and editorials during the Umbrella Movement from 29th September to 15th December 2014. The original data set was mainly obtained from Wisenews search engine. Tabulations have been compiled to analyse the empirical patterns that underline the political stance during the movement. "Pro-movement" refers to the position in support of the movement, condemning the government and police forces whereas "anti-movement" means the position criticising the movement as well as supporting the government and police (for details see Table 1). "Neutral" refers to balancing the interests of both sides. For television and radio news, a series of case studies was chosen to examine their performance.

For the sake of gaining a primary understanding of the rise of Internet alternative media, in-depth interviews were conducted with content-providers (e.g. founders, Chief Executive Officers and journalists) from online alternative media. An interview guideline was designed to ask some standard questions about their organisational and personal experience. The study focused on why they found or joined the online alternative media, their personal perception towards mainstream media, attractiveness of their news reports, their daily operations and the prospects for future development.

4. The Challenge of Media Self-censorship in Hong Kong

Since the official agreement on the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China in the early 1980s, the future of press freedom in Hong Kong has attracted global and local concern. In general, many scholars believed the political change after the handover would bring new state-media relations (Chan and Lee, 1991; Lee and Chu, 1998). Some predicted that the new sovereign government would continue the strategy of co-option, like the colonial government did (Fung and Lee, 1994). Others assumed that the power transfer was accompanied by shifts in "journalistic paradigms", referring to the mass media with a critical attitude towards the Chinese government incrementally shifting to a more centrist position (Chan and Lee, 1989). As the Chinese government had to demonstrate to the British government and the world that it respected the "One Country, Two Systems" principle and freedom of the press in Hong Kong, media control was not obvious during the transition (Lee and Chan, 2009). However, the Chinese government had a bad record of suppressing press freedom so Hong Kong people, journalists, and academic experts generally believed that with more control and repression from China, media self-censorship would gradually be practised after 1997 (Lee, 1998; Vines, 1999).

In line with the earlier studies, current literature has long agreed that self-censorship is an omnipresent threat for Hong Kong media (Holbig, 2003; Lee and Lin, 2006; Ma, 2007). Media self-censorship refers to "a set of editorial actions committed by media organisations aiming to curry favour and avoid offending the power stakeholders such as the government, advertisers and major business corporations" (Lee and Chan, 2009, p. 112). In Hong Kong, unlike on the mainland, there was no formal pre-publication censorship system imposed and the Chinese government had no institutional power to remove journalists or close down media organisations. But, in fact, they have issued reporting directions to "guide" the Hong Kong press (Chan, Lee and So, 2012). Since the handover, the Chinese government has displayed certain "bottle lines", known as the "three no's" policy for Hong Kong, to limit acceptable coverage (Lee and Chu, 1998). Under the policy, the mass media have to pay careful attention to or refuse to report three politically sensitive topics, namely (1) no advocacy for Taiwan or Tibet independence, (2) no engagement in subversion activities, and (3) no personal attacks on national leaders. Obviously, the three-no areas are all concerned with national issues and interests. However, in recent years, the policy has shifted to local matters: media treatment of news topics, including Taiwan independence, commemoration of the Tiananmen incident and the legal status of the Falun Gong in Hong Kong, which have been regarded as the top sensitive stories for the Chinese government (Lee and Chan, 2009). As the Chinese government

does not want to openly constrain freedom in Hong Kong or formally punish the "violating" media organisations, it turned to inducing media self-censorship by adopting strategic interactions between the media organisations and power holders (Lee, 2007).

To begin with, the Chinese government influenced the media organisations through co-opting media owners and executives, especially those with close economic ties on the mainland (Ma, 2007). For the Beijing leaders, indirect paths to control local media were more feasible and operational. Certainly, operating business in China heavily relies on *guanxi* while the success of business depends very much on the policy or ad hoc regulations issued by the Chinese authorities with close ties. Thus, businessmen with huge investments in China tend to create harmonious relations with the authorities by giving "gifts" or avoiding offending the leaders while the Chinese government might offer political and presumably economic benefits in return (Chan, Lee and So, 2012). Numerous researches pointed out that most owners of Hong Kong's mainstream media organisations were either nominated from high-level government institutions, usually members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee or the NPC, or tycoons with extensive business relations on the mainland so this special political and economic status forced the media organisations to report news in a "careful" manner (Fung, 2007; Ma, 2007). With regard to "radical" and "stubborn" media, the Chinese government ordered pro-China companies to withdraw their advertisements from them (Ching, 1998). The *Apple Daily*, a pro-democracy newspaper and also "problematic newspaper" in Beijing's eyes, had long faced an advertising boycott by pro-Beijing figures such as developers and banks as a form of punishment since the 1997 handover (Hong Kong Journalists Association, 2007).

Secondly, norms of "political correctness" were also set up and exercised by Chinese officials through their criticisms of the Hong Kong media (Lee, 2007). From 1999 to 2000, Chinese officials criticised Hong Kong media's standpoints on the question of Taiwan. Wang Feng-chao, deputy director of China's Liaison Office openly warned the media not to report views advocating independence for Taiwan (Hong Kong Journalists Association, 2000). Then, after the 1st July demonstration in 2003, in which 500,000 citizens protested against the national security legislation, Chinese officials criticised a number of local media organisations as major mobilisers behind the movement. In March 2013, the Liaison Office was discovered to have made direct calls to individual journalists. One journalist of a television station said that he received a warning from an official in Beijing about not conducting sensitive interviews related to the Tiananmen incident and claimed that he was "being watched" (Hong Kong Journalists Association, 2014). Thus, some journalists tend to report news according to the norms of

professional "objectivity", preferring not to criticise the authorities, so as to avoid responsibility, trouble or punishment. Lee (2007) regarded this kind of "objectivity" as also a means of "self-censorship".

Thirdly, the Chinese government further constrained the entry permissions to Hong Kong and Macao journalists. In February 2009, Beijing announced new reporting rules to replace the previous ones, the so-called seven regulations, made in the wake of the 4th June 1989 crackdown. The new rules required journalists to apply in advance to the State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office for permission to report on the mainland. Before this, most journalists could travel freely to the mainland on reporting duties (Hong Kong Journalists Association, 2009). For "friendly" media, permission could be obtained from the Chinese officials easily. But, for "hostile" ones, travel for reporting was severely restricted. The *Apple Daily*, for example, was for several years banned from reporting in China (Hong Kong Journalists Association, 2001). In order to maintain access to China, the media organisations had to coordinate their strategy. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the Chinese government controls Hong Kong through co-opting media owners, setting up the norms of "political correctness" and exercising "reporting restrictions on the mainland". Hence, Ma (2007) summarised that the state-press relationship after the handover was under the dynamics of "constant negotiation amidst self-restraint".

5. New Politically Sensitive Topic in China: The Umbrella Movement

In the context of comparative studies, Hong Kong is an interesting hybrid regime. People enjoy a high level of civil liberties such as freedom of the press and rule of law, but Hong Kong is still far from being a full democracy because of its limited electoral system. Today, half of the seats in the Legislative Council are not chosen by universal suffrage and the Chief Executive is still handpicked by an Election Committee comprising 1,200 members, mainly made up of businessmen and controlled by Beijing. In December 2007, the NPCSC officially announced that the election method for the fifth Chief Executive in 2017 may be implemented by universal suffrage. The whole debate since has concentrated on how to remove or maintain the political screening before the election.

In order to advocate the elimination of "unreasonable screening", Benny Tai Yiu-ting, together with Reverend Chu Yiu-ming and Chan Kin-man, formally called upon a group of people to occupy Central, the most important business district, as a method to fight for democracy. Although "Occupy Central" held a series of activities, including deliberation days, protests and a referendum in an attempt to attract public attention and gain their support, but the NPCSC ignored all of them and announced the framework for the

election method of the Chief Executive in 2017 on 31st August 2014. The framework expressly declares that (1) the future Nominating Committee will be formed "in accordance with" the make-up of the 1,200-member Election Committee from the 2012 election, (2) the Committee will be divided equally between four sectors (business, professional, labour and political sectors) and largely controlled by pro-China forces, as well as (3) each candidate will need the endorsement of at least 50 per cent of the committee's members (only 12.5 per cent of nominations was needed for each candidate in the 2012 election) (*South China Morning Post*, 2014a). These decisions were denounced as "shutting the gate on Hong Kong's political reform", resulting in condemnation by pro-democratic legislators, Occupy Central and student representatives.

On 22nd September 2014, students, including those from university and secondary school, started a week-long class boycott to draw public attention to democracy outside government headquarters. On 28th September, thousands of demonstrators attempted to block the road in Admiralty; then, the police fired 87 canisters of tear gas and used pepper spray and batons against them. Protesters finally occupied the main roads outside the government headquarters complex in Admiralty and many joined in to block a section of Causeway Bay and Nathan Road in Mong Kok. As the protesters held umbrellas to protect themselves against tear gas and pepper spray, international media, for example, the CNN, BBC, and Reuters, called this campaign the Umbrella Revolution while local media portrayed it as the Umbrella Movement. Overall, the whole campaign blocked main roads in Hong Kong for 79 days from 28th September to 15th December 2014.

For most locals and international media, the Umbrella Movement was a student-led campaign for "an election method for the Chief Executive that ensures their rights of choosing". However, the interpretation of the pro-Beijing leaders was entirely different. They portrayed the Umbrella Movement as attempts to overrule decisions made by the NPCSC and challenge the authority of the Chinese government. President Xi Jin-ping stated that this movement was a direct challenge not just to the authority of the Hong Kong government but Beijing (*The Standard*, 2014). In addition, some Beijing leaders such as Wang Yang, the Vice Premier, and Zhang Xiao-ming, the director of the Central Government's Liaison Office in Hong Kong, regarded this as a "colour revolution", which referred to a protest funded by Western governments to create chaos (*South China Morning Post*, 2014b). Even worse, the *People's Daily* linked the Occupy movement to seeking Hong Kong's "self-determination" and even "independence" (*South China Morning Post*, 2014c).

Because of the political sensitivity, news related to the Occupy movement was strictly blocked on the mainland and only pro-China opinions and

news could be released in China. The Chinese government's worry was that the Occupy movement (such as the protest tactics, issues and mobilising methods) might have repercussions on the mainland, creating a potential threat to the mainland's stability (*Ming Pao Daily News*, 2014a). Then, the Chinese government published a series of news reports and commentaries through its three mouthpieces (Central China Television, the *People's Daily* and the Xinhua News Agency) for several days continuously, highlighting the disruption caused, emphasising that any attempt to force the Chinese government to accept "unreasonable demands" was futile and restating its high-profile support for the Hong Kong government administration. Overall, the Umbrella Movement has become a politically sensitive topic, and for this reason the media treatment of this issue can be considered significant in the evaluation of the phenomenon of self-censorship.

6. Performance of Mainstream Media during the Umbrella Movement

In Hong Kong, people traditionally rely on newspapers, television and radio as the main source of news. In 2014, 53.2 per cent of citizens depended on newspapers, while 77.8 per cent and 26.2 per cent relied on television and radio respectively (HKUPOP, 2014c). The influence of mainstream media still prevails and framing power is still exercised. However, the pro-China stance and media self-censorship are quite obvious when facing this politically sensitive issue.

Hong Kong newspapers used to be classified in terms of their political stance towards China and democracy (Lee and Lin, 2006). During the Umbrella Movement, for example, Hong Kong people classified the pro-China newspaper as "anti-movement" in contrast to calling a pro-democracy paper "pro-movement". In general, the pro-China papers tended to take an anti-movement stance, which (1) urged the protesters to stop occupying, (2) put more emphasis on the social disturbance, illegal practices and economic destruction, (3) supported the police with regard to road clearance and (4) encouraged the Hong Kong people to accept the framework of universal suffrage set out by the Chinese government. On the other hand, the pro-movement papers tend to present empathy for the protesters, which (1) urged the government to make concessions, (2) reported the beauty of the protesters, (3) focused on the police's and gangsters' violence in attacking the protesters and (4) emphasised that Hong Kong need democracy without political screening. The Western media generally took the pro-movement side and supported Hong Kong protesters to protect the rights of democracy. *Time Magazine* (2014), for example, used the Umbrella Revolution as a cover story with the headline "The Umbrella Revolution: Hong Kong's fight for freedom is a challenge to China". *The Independent* (2014) released an

editorial entitled "Hong Kong grows up – and scale of protests is a warning to Beijing", highlighting the bravery of protesters and expansion of Beijing's intervention in Hong Kong affairs. However, most local newspapers took a different stance in their reporting.

Table 1 summarises the political positions of 17 major newspapers (including free and paid ones) through analysing the headline stories and editorials during the Umbrella Movement. In regard to the headline stories, which were used to attract readers, the findings show that most newspapers took an anti-movement stance. More than half of them (53.01 per cent) tended to describe the Umbrella Movement as chaotic (*Oriental Daily*, 2014), a battlefield (*Sing Tao Daily*, 2014), illegal (*Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, 2014a) and violent (*Wen Wei Po*, 2014a). On the other hand, only a few newspapers (14.86 per cent) took a pro-movement stance and portrayed the movement as brave (*Apple Daily*, 2014a) and condemned the violent sup-pression by the police (*Hong Kong Economic Journal*, 2014a). The "neutral" position (32.13 per cent) attempted to balance the interests of both sides. Table 2 shows the headlines of major newspapers on 29 September 2014.

Besides showing that most headlines were anti-movement, the analysis of editorials, representing the position of the newspaper organisations, indicated a similar pattern. The anti-movement newspapers (66.49 per cent) tend to condemn the movement and urge the protests to stop occupying areas of Hong Kong. Their core messages included damage to the competitiveness of Hong Kong (*Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, 2014b), the movement being funded by the United States (*Ta Kung Pao*, 2014) and support for the police in the clearance (*Wen Wei Po*, 2014b). The pro-movement newspapers (16.29 per cent) attempted to frame the protests as rational and peaceful ones (*Apple Daily*, 2014b) and urged the government to solve the political conflicts actively (*Hong Kong Economic Journal*, 2014b). Also, the neutral editorials (17.22 per cent) tried to balance the powers on both sides and urged the government and protesters to solve the political conflicts through conversation. Overall, most newspapers reported the Umbrella Movement in a pro-China light whereas only a few media organisations took the pro-movement side to support the protest.

Indeed, the *Apple Daily*, a major local newspaper openly supporting the Umbrella Movement, faced a series of political suppression attempts by pro-China camps. A group of anti-movement protesters (suspected of being mainlanders and gangsters) blocked the entrances of the newspaper's headquarters and obstructed newspaper delivery trucks and staff buses for more than a week. The protesters claimed that they wanted to voice their anger against the newspaper's favourable coverage of the movement (*South China Morning Post*, 2014d). In addition, the *Apple Daily* came under a soy sauce attack: groups of masked men approached delivery staff in three

Table 1 Political Stances of Major Newspapers Headline Stories and Editorials (29th September to 16th December 2014)

Name of Newspaper	Usage Rate (Mean)	Headline Stories (Number of piece)				Editorials (Number of piece)			
		Pro-movement	Neutral	Anti-movement	Total	Pro-movement	Neutral	Anti-movement	Total
Apple Daily	4.75	54	5	0	59	66	0	0	66
Headline Daily	3.65	0	22	26	48	0	0	41	41
Oriental Daily	3.22	0	9	55	64	0	4	50	54
Ming Pao Daily News	3.20	18	36	5	59	10	16	23	49
AM730	3.14	5	20	6	31	–	–	–	–
Metro Daily	2.92	11	24	1	36	–	–	–	–
Sing Tao Daily	2.92	0	15	32	47	0	9	56	65
South China Morning Post	2.48	5	43	0	48	7	12	6	25
The Sun	2.22	0	2	28	30	0	4	45	49
Hong Kong Economic Times	2.19	0	6	11	17	4	23	14	41
The Standard	1.98	4	20	8	32	10	9	18	37
Hong Kong Economic Journal	1.75	3	7	4	14	21	18	2	41
Wen Wei Po	1.59	0	0	69	69	0	0	67	67
Sing Pao	1.42	0	4	42	46	0	6	29	35
Ta Kung Pao	1.40	0	0	71	71	0	1	65	66
Hong Kong Daily News	1.30	11	26	2	39	4	21	21	46
Hong Kong Commercial Daily	1.26	0	1	36	37	0	6	61	67
Total		111	240	396	747	122	129	498	749
(Per cent)		(14.86%)	(32.13%)	(53.01%)	(100%)	(16.29%)	(17.22%)	(66.49%)	(100%)

Notes: Headline stories and editorials which are unrelated to the Umbrella Movement are excluded.

Pro-movement = Supporting the movement, condemning the actions of government and police forces, and urging the government to make political concession; Anti-movement = Criticising the movement, emphasising the economic and social damage as well as, supporting the police for clearance; Neutral = Balancing the interests of both sides.

Source: Author's analysis, based on the information obtained from the WiseNews electronic database and the usage rate is from Online Communication Research Centre (2011).

Table 2 Headlines of Influential Newspapers on 29th September 2014

Name of Newspaper	Political Stance	Headline
Oriental Daily	Anti-movement	Chaos! The wave of protests: Use of Tear Gas
Ta Kung Pao	Anti-movement	Chaos of Occupy Centre Central, the Financial Centre, faced to be paralysed: Shame on Benny Tai
Headline News	Anti-movement	Chaos of Occupy Central
Ming Pao Daily News	Neutral	Police fired tear gas endlessly: Occupy expanded to Hong Kong Island and Kowloon
Apple Daily	Pro-movement	Not Scared! 60,000 participated in Occupy Central and urged Leung to resign

Source: Author's analysis and translation, based on the headlines obtained from the WiseNews electronic database.

locations. They threatened the staff with knives and poured sauce on stacks of newspapers, hitting 15,200 copies of the *Apple Daily* (*South China Morning Post*, 2014e). Even worse, Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, the founder of the *Apple Daily*, came under physical attacks at the occupy site in Admiralty after which three men were arrested because they were suspected of hitting him in the face with stinky animal organs (*South China Morning Post*, 2014f). The case of the *Apple Daily* demonstrates how the pro-Beijing forces have suppressed press freedom and attacked "hostile" media organisations. In order to get out of trouble, the other newspaper organisations tend to be conservative, forcing media reports to toe the line of China's stance.

Apart from newspapers, TV stations also faced the criticism of being "harmonised". As mentioned above, Hong Kong people mainly rely on television for news. Although there are two free-to-air stations, TVB's market position is so dominant that it captures more than 90 per cent of the television audience (Chan, Lee and So, 2012). However, the self-censorship of television news is also remarkable. TVB has close economic ties in Guangdong Province and Charles Chan Kwok-keung, the chairman, has extensive business operations on the mainland (*Sunshine Magazine*, 2013). When the protests had continued for almost three weeks, protesters decided to surround the Chief Executive's Office and conflicts between the police and protesters were sparked off on Lung Wo Road in Admiralty. TVB news aired video showing a group of plain-clothes police officers carrying out violent and sustained attacks on an unarmed and restrained protester, Ken Tsang

Kin-chiu, in a dark corner. The original report on the alleged attack, aired on TVB on the morning of 17th October, said the officers had "carried the protester to a dark corner, put him on the ground, and punched and kicked him". But that part of the voiceover was removed for a few hours and then replaced with another one at noon saying that officers were "suspected to have used excessive force" (*South China Morning Post*, 2014g). In a separate incident, more than 140 staff from TVB's news department joined a sign-in and expressed their disagreement with the station management's judgement on that report while, at the same time, the Office of the Communication Authority received more than 1,500 complaints due to the "deleted voiceover" (*Ming Pao Daily News*, 2014b). Yuen Chi-wai, the TVB's news Director, called an internal meeting with his staff, which was secretly recorded. The audio clips were posted anonymously on YouTube and Yuen criticised the staff "On what grounds can we say (officers) 'dragged him to a dark corner, and punched and kicked him'? Are you a worm in the officer's stomach (to know the police) deliberately did this?" (*South China Morning Post*, 2014g). This case clearly showed the media self-censorship within the TVB news, the leading news organisation in Hong Kong. The management tries to avoid negative reports on police officers, which might provoke the Chinese leaders. After this incident, several staffs, who had handled this incident or joined the sign-in, were transferred and demoted (*Ming Pao Daily News*, 2014c).

Even though radio news has become less influential among the public, the pro-China legislators also criticised radio stations' political stance. Tam Yiu-Chung, the chairman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, accused Commercial Radio intentionally or unintentionally of having mobilised people to join the occupy movement while the hosts banned the anti-movement sentiment, suggesting that its licence renewal should be declined. Ng Leung-sing, another anti-movement legislator, criticised both RTHK and Commercial Radio for spending too much airtime on discussing the movement, thereby causing social conflicts (*Ming Pao Daily News*, 2014d). However, Wong Yuk-man, a pro-movement legislator, condemned the pro-China camp for harming the freedom of the press and editorial independence (*Apple Daily*, 2014c). Overall, the pro-China side used licence renewal as a weapon to force the radio stations to lessen their focus on the occupy movement, compelling them to perform self-censorship, or at least not be pro-movement.

7. Expanding Influence of Internet Alternative Media

As aforementioned, Hong Kong people who perceive mainstream media self-censorship as a serious problem are more likely to be Internet alternative media users. The Umbrella Movement created an opportunity to push more

Hong Kong people to pay attention to the Internet alternative media. A recent survey showed that people who support the movement were relatively more Internet- (85.43 per cent versus 65.48 per cent) and Facebook- (43.84 per cent versus 23.62 per cent) active than the opposition. In terms of primary source of information, the supporters relied more on social media (30.86 per cent versus 5.85 per cent) than TV (19.16 per cent versus 46.82 per cent) (Wong and Chan, 2015). The gap between supporters and the opposition is reflected by their media usage. In particular, the number of "Likes" on several online news media was recorded as a "blooming increase". Table 3 indicates the number and growth rate of "Likes" on several major online news media since the Umbrella Movement commenced.

The findings show that nearly all of the online media recorded considerable increases in terms of the number of "Likes" within 79 days. The most significant is for the *Passion Times*, which established their Facebook page in December 2012, which originally had around 60,000 "Likes" before the movement but reached more than 286,000, a growth rate of more than 375 per cent. The second most popular one is the *SocREC*, which started its Facebook page in September, 2010, receiving about 50,000 "Likes" before the movement which grew to more than 200,000 with a growth rate over 79 days of more than 300 per cent. This study further analysed the reasons for the rapid expansion of circulation from a content-provider perspective.

Table 3   Growth Rate of "Likes" on Facebook Pages of Major Internet Alternative Media

	Joining date of Facebook page	*Number of "Likes" before the movement (28 Sep. 2014)*	*Number of "Likes" after the movement (15 Dec. 2014)*	*Growth rate within 79 days (%)*
Passion Times	26 Dec. 2012	60,000	286,000	376.67
SocREC	27 Sep. 2010	50,000	200,200	300.40
Local Press	23 Apr. 2014	12,500	29,200	133.60
In-media HK	8 May 2011	180,000	410,800	128.22
Memehk	25 Apr. 2013	37,000	75,700	104.59
Speak Out HK*	14 Jan. 2013	70,000	132,000	88.57
United Social Press	26 May 2013	12,000	22,000	83.33
852 Post	13 Nov. 2013	30,000	42,600	42.00

Note: *   Speak Out HK is an anti-movement Internet alternative media.
Source: Author's analysis; based on figures provided by each Internet alternative media and their Facebook page.

Firstly, disappointment with mainstream media resulted in the rise of online media. Internet media users believed that mainstream media were taking a pro-government stance while online media presented the truth within the occupy sites. Wong Yeung-tat, founder of the *Passion Times*, admitted that mainstream media are politically conservative due to the business connections with China. According to him, "there are a lot of cases showing that mainstream media aim for 'stability maintenance'. For example, we have a video to show how the police officers actively attacked the protesters in Mong Kok on 5th November, but TVB news framed it as the protesters actively clashing with the police from their voiceover and video cut. Another example is the case of Jimmy Lai under attack. We had a full video capturing the whole process of how the gangsters attacked Lai but TVB news devoted a lot of airtime to capturing how these gangsters were caught by the pickets, creating a perception that the pickets used excessive violence. But, these witnesses' act was only for self-protection. Mainstream media have close business connections with the mainland so it tends to act like this. I think that Hong Kong people do not trust mainstream media and that is the main reason for them paying more attention to the *Passion Times*" (personal communication, 16 November 2014). Anthony Lam Yue-yeung, the Chief Executive Officer of *Memehk*, denounced mainstream media for working like a "propaganda machine" by delivering anti-movement messages instead of reporting the facts to the public (personal communication, 10 December 2014). Therefore, the people's distrust in mainstream media is the main reason why they now pay more attention to online news reports.

Secondly, the need for rapid information delivery is important for Hong Kong people and why they prefer online media. As the Umbrella Movement was an unprecedented incident, many people needed to keep updated on the latest information, leading to the huge attraction of online media. Wong Yeung-tat commented that the public had paid huge attention to this unprecedented movement, so they might want to keep checking their Facebook frequently; online media can fulfil this expectation (personal communication, 16 November 2014). According to Daniel Cheung, a journalist of the *SocREC*, "most journalists in our team have the login name and password of our Facebook account so we can update what we have captured directly on our Facebook page without the editors' approval. In other words, we are journalists and editors as well. That is the reason why we can provide immediate news without a long editing procedure" (personal communication, 17 November 2014). Antony Lam also explained that in their reporting procedure journalists can directly upload information to the Facebook page about breaking news. He believed that "rapid information is the most important attraction of online media but mainstream media may not

do this" (personal communication, 10 December 2014). As a result, flexibility of online media is the second reason why online media attracts circulation.

Thirdly, online media offer more alternative perspectives which are not available from mainstream media. Because of the limited airtime and anti-movement political stance, some news may be ignored by mainstream media but this is not the case for online media. According to Wong Yeung-tat (personal communication, 16 November 2014), "we have two to three journalists on standby 24 hours a day in each occupy site so they can film immediately when any incident happens. But, the journalists in mainstream media mostly stay in the 'journalist zone': they tend to capture the news when something has happened already". Then, he shared the case of "Ah Lung" and declared he was hospitalised due to the torture by police, but mainstream media did not report this. "Maybe mainstream media did not know him or avoided reporting the violence of police officers, but he is one of the protesters and means a lot to us", Wong added. Anthony Lam (personal communication, 10 December 2014) also found that providing alternative angles was vitally important for online media. He shared that *Memehk* reported a case of developing environmentally friendly electronics in the study room in Admiralty with more than 800,000 views on their Facebook page which was certainly "unreported" by mainstream media. According to him, "we try to present the 'pureness' of the protesters which is seldom captured in mainstream media".

8. Theoretical Implications on Online Alternative Media Development: Credibility, Professionalism and Official Recognition

This study examined the public distrust in mainstream media leading to the growing attraction of online alternative media. The findings are in line with the current literature that most active online alternative media have a clear political stance of pro-movement and attempted to mobilise people to join the campaign. In fact, online alternative media have long pointed to the increasing potential in informing and politically mobilising people (Atton, 2002). Hence, some scholars have labelled online alternative media as "critical media" (Fuchs, 2010) or "radical media" (Downing, 2001), because many politically oriented alternative media have close connections with social movement organisations (Atkinson, 2010). Through the case study of the Umbrella Movement, this study further highlights some theoretical implications concerning the (1) credibility of online media, (2) professionalism of the journalists of online media, and (3) official recognition.

Firstly, credibility has long been at the centre of online media studies (Golan, 2010). This study found that Internet alternative media put great emphasis on covering political gatherings and protests or even mobilising

their audiences to participate in events so media credibility may not be the first consideration. According to Wong Yeung-tat, "we post our news reports based on 'factuality' while we want to present the true story to the audience with video and images" (personal communication, 16 November 2014). Antony Lam said that "our reporting principle is based on emergency" and admitted that "online media have a gap in terms of credibility in most people's eyes when compared with mainstream media. But the Umbrella Movement provided an opportunity for Hong Kong society to compare the performance between mainstream and online media and we found that our credibility has improved in many locals' eyes" (personal communication, 10 December 2014). Thus, online media put less emphasis on their credibility but more on "factuality and emergency". The Umbrella Movement created room for online media to promote and improve their program and credibility.

Secondly, media professionalism of Internet alternative media has become an important academic debate (Skjerdal, 2011). The editors and journalists from Internet alternative media always criticise mainstream media for displaying "professional hegemony" while mainstream media question whether Internet alternative media are "unprofessional". This kind of conflict between mainstream and online media journalists was clearly reflected during the Umbrella Movement. In fact, online media stressed that they were one of the protesters, sparking off criticisms by mainstream media. On the other hand, traditional media emphasised their objectivity and neutrality in their content while their staff received professional training; thus, they challenged the political stance and professionalism of online media. Some criticised online media journalists for confusing the identities between "protester" and "journalist" and accused them of yelling slogans and filming at the same time. Also, they emphasised that professional media should persist in "independence" as their top priority and report like "a third party" and condemned the journalists of online media for not undertaking professional training, leading to the criticism of low credibility (*Ming Pao Daily News*, 2014e). Conflicts arise when mainstream media challenge the political stance of online media and the Internet media criticise mainstream media for practising self-censorship.

Thirdly, the issues of official recognition are another important theoretical question on Internet alternative media literature (Wall, 2012). Some Hong Kong police officers do not recognise online media as media organisations but regard them as protesters with cameras, disturbing the police operations. Although many online media journalists possess "press cards", they are not officially recognised by the Hong Kong Journalists Association and the government, for this reason police officers sometimes prohibit them from reporting. Wong Yeung-tat explained that the *Passion Times* had been registered according to the "Local Newspaper Ordinance" but its journalists

cannot attend the government's press conferences, because their "press card" is not officially recognised (personal communication, 16 November 2014). Anthony Lam also found that police officers do not recognise online media journalists as "registered journalists" and commented that "the police give better treatment to mainstream media but my colleagues sometimes face disrespect from the police, depending on the officers and operations" (personal communication, 10 December 2014). Worse still, Daniel Cheung, a journalist from the *SocREC*, claimed he was tortured by police officers even though he had shown his "press pass" (personal communication, 16 November 2014). As online media have a close connection with the social movement organisations, the police regard them as protesters rather than journalists.

It should be remembered that although audiences are increasing, the size of online alternative media remains relatively small. All my interviewees admitted that inadequate funding and manpower were two main challenges for operations, because of limited business advertising and donations. Most journalists from online media are part-timers or volunteers. In addition, online alternative media relies heavily on the Internet, including their official websites and Facebook, for news delivery. Thus, cyber-attacks are key weapons to threaten online media. The *Passion Times* has been the victim of cyber-attacks since the Umbrella Movement where the hackers used the techniques of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) to make a website unavailable by overwhelming it with traffic from multiple sources. Thus, their website was shut down for more than a month during the movement.

9. Conclusion

Existing literatures have long recognise that the Chinese government is attempting to control Hong Kong media through co-optation of media owners, setting up a norm of political correctness and building on restrictions on reporting on the mainland, pressuring mainstream media to practise self-censorship. The problems of media self-censorship are especially obvious in relation to politically sensitive topics namely Taiwan independence, the Tiananmen Incident, and the Falun Gong. However, since the birth of the Umbrella Movement, it has become a politically sensitive topic, with pro-Beijing media portraying it as a threat to the authority of the Chinese government. This article examines the case of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong and exposes the problem of mainstream media self-censorship. With increasing public distrust in mainstream media due to tightening political control, many Hong Kong people are paying more attention to online alternative media.

However, as Hong Kong's status as a Special Administrative Region under Chinese sovereignty has made its regime distinctively resilient,

the strong political control of Beijing is very unlikely to collapse in the foreseeable future. While mainstream media have exhibited a pro-China stance, online alternative media aim to challenge their symbolic power. More importantly, the audiences of Internet alternative media are expected to be more politically informed and active, with many of them being more critical toward mainstream media with increased negative evaluation of the Hong Kong government. In other words, the Internet alternative media have captured an alternative political space attracting the critically minded and liberal-oriented citizens of Hong Kong. It is expected that Hong Kong will be trapped in a growing state-society conflict if the Chinese government does not promise a generally acceptable democratic reform proposal.

It is important to note that online media can have great political impact because freedom of expression on the Internet is still relatively free from political intervention, unlike on the mainland, as the government has not imposed systematic Internet censorship in Hong Kong. But with the rising threat of online media informing and mobilising people politically, it remains to be seen if political control and interference will be expanded to the Internet, affecting the development of online media in Hong Kong.

Notes

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Research Notes

China's SAARC Membership: The Debate

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Abstract

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been in existence for 29 years, but has made slow progress. Despite this, many countries within and outside the region aspire to be part of this forum. As a result, SAARC is the only association in the world, which has more observer members (nine), than full-fledged members (eight). China is presently the observer member in SAARC, and working towards enhancing its role to "dialogue partner" and later on obtaining the full membership. However, China's SAARC membership is widely debated. In this context, the paper attempts to analyse the arguments in favour and against China's membership and examines India's position and concerns *vis-à-vis* China's elevated role in SAARC. Subsequently, it identifies and discusses the factors favouring China to become a full fledge member of SAARC. This paper concludes that China's SAARC membership might become inevitable at some time in the future. However, the question is – can India intelligently and sophisticatedly play its cards to advance its own interests?

Keywords: *China, SAARC, India, South Asia*

1. Introduction

China's foreign policy has evolved in recent decades to consolidate Chinese interests. For other interested countries, this could indeed become a lesson as to how to consolidate and promote their own national interests (Mahapatra, 2010; Patten, 2010). Initially, China's Asia policy focused on Northeast and Southeast Asia. But in recent times, South Asia has gained tremendous importance in China's foreign policy, which currently aims to maintain and promote regional peace and stability and, in consequence sustain China's own peaceful rise. Also, as India began to look eastward, China began to look southward to counter India's rise. In this context, South Asia constitutes an important region for China's strategic ambit.

Five factors may be cited as primarily having shaped China's South Asia policy. First, South Asia, located midway between the oil-rich Middle East and Southeast Asia, is strategically important for China. South Asian countries also have common borders with China, giving China an alternative option of opening direct access through South Asia to the international sea lanes of the Indian Ocean, which would enhance safe trade. Second, South Asia is rich in natural resources such as coal, iron ore and hydrocarbon derivatives, some of them yet to be fully explored. The region also has growing economies and millions of population, providing enormous potential for trade and a huge market for Chinese goods. Third, the Indian Ocean region is also vital for China's growth. China's oil consumption will increase by 150 per cent by 2020, of which imports will account for more than 75 per cent (Holmes *et al*., 2010: 129). At the same time, there are serious security threats to China in the Indian Ocean region like piracy, terrorism, drug and material trafficking, and weapons of mass destruction. Ensuring security for Chinese interests in the Indian Ocean is facilitated by close coordination with the South Asian countries. Fourth, South Asia will play a critical role in China's ambitious 21st century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) initiative. Under this initiative, China plans to build a maze of Silk Roads, which includes revival of the ancient Silk Road, connecting China with Central Asia, Europe, and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. Subsequently, the MSR also aims to connect various ports in the region to increase trade. In this regard, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have already agreed to be part of this initiative. Fifth, although China's South Asia policy is no longer Indo-centric, due to the changing security environment in the region, India continues to be a key factor in shaping China's policy towards South Asia, since India has emerged as an economic power, combined with growing military, nuclear weapon and missile capability. Subsequently, India's growing strategic partnership with the US and Japan also continues to be a security concern for China.

Thus, in the overall perspective, China's South Asia policy is aimed at sustaining its rise and China can be stable and progress towards prosperity only when the neighbourhood is stable and prosperous (Raman, 2011). This aspect was emphasised by President Xi Jinping, "a peaceful, stable and prosperous South Asia conforms to China's interests and that China is willing to align its development strategies with those of South Asian countries to achieve mutually beneficial development and common prosperity" (Rajan, 2015). At the same time, China wishes to increase its own influence in the region; address the transnational issues; nibble at India's influence; reduce the ability of potentially hostile powers like the US and Japan to harm China's interests in the region; and work towards win-win cooperation and promote multilateralism (Paptheologou *et al*., 2014: 288). In this multifarious quest,

the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) becomes a vital forum for sustaining China's rise.

2. China and SAARC

Although SAARC is not a vibrant association like Association for Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) or European Union (EU), but it is the only grouping which comprises all members of the South Asian region. China became a SAARC observer member at the Dhaka Summit in 2005, with Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh supporting the move, and India, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Maldives opposing it. Ever since, China has made significant progress in terms of its participation in SAARC. The China-South Asia Business Forum, founded in 2004, which primarily focuses on "communication, cooperation, development and mutual benefits", has been further strengthened with China's engagement with SAARC. In 2006, the China-South Asia Business Council was established to act as a link between Chinese companies and SAARC Chambers of Commerce and Industry. From 2007, it has attended the successive SAARC summits; it continues to invite senior diplomats from the region to China; and has hosted the South Asian countries' commodity fair and China-SAARC senior officials' meeting. In June 2013, a major initiative was the China-South Asia Exposition, with Bangladesh as the theme country for that year (Kondapalli, 2014: 8). Moreover, China has also strengthened its foothold through funding various development projects in the region like under the SAARC Development Fund (SDF), it pledged US$300,000 (*ibid*). In 2014, China even nominated an envoy for SAARC, indicating the significance it attaches to this grouping. Apart from this, the high level bilateral visit between China and SAARC countries has strengthened the political, economic and military ties and also allowed China to play a greater role in SAARC, thus to certain extent reducing India's role. Overall, China's role in SAARC is limited by its observer status, the slow progress of SAARC itself, and India's increased role and the increased presence of the US and Japan in the region, which act as counterweights to China. Nevertheless, this has not prevented China from aspiring to become a full member of SAARC.

3. The Debate

SAARC has been in existence for 29 years but has made slow progress. One reason for this sluggish growth has been that its members are at sixes and sevens on several key issues affecting this regional body. China's full-fledged membership is one of them. One group argues in favour, on the grounds that China is geographically close to South Asia, sharing borders with India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bhutan. As an observer member, it has

contributed significantly to the progress of SAARC in several ways and the profile of SAARC will be enhanced in the international political economy if the association comprises both India and China, being the world's fastest growing economies, most populous countries and significant players in global politics, economics and security affairs (Mahapatra, 2011: 512). Furthermore, it has overwhelming support from Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka for obtaining membership. At successive SAARC summits, these countries have strongly and consistently pitched for a rising profile for China in SAARC from an "Observer member" to "Dialogue Partner." The main intentions of these countries favouring China is to limit India's dominance in the region, as the former can be a counterweight to India's power within the structure and also to benefit from its economic, political and military engagement with China.

On the other hand, the arguments opposing China's SAARC membership run along the following lines. First, SAARC is already affected by the shadow of the India-Pakistan fault line. For example, SAARC is the least economically integrated region: the intra-regional SAARC trade is less than 5 per cent of SAARC worldwide trade. In comparison, ASEAN has 25 per cent intra-regional trade and EU has 60 per cent. Ironically, under British colonial rule, intra-regional trade in this region was about 20 per cent, but now it is marginal (Kumar, 2014: 2). Thus, many argue that inclusion of China will create another shadow of the India-China fault line, leading to nominal trade. Subsequently, SAARC is already a complicated forum, and could get further complicated with the inclusion of China. Second, China is an undemocratic country, which has been seriously criticised by the international community for its human rights record. But this argument falls flat on its face, as most of the South Asian countries are fragile democracies, with some of them being strongly inclined to military rule like Pakistan and Bangladesh. Third, China has close ties with SAARC countries in all realms, which will facilitate its domination of the organisation. The China-Pakistan "all-weather friendship" would further undermine India's profile in SAARC. Fourth, China can meaningfully engage with SAARC even without full membership. For example, ASEAN has strong economic ties with China, but China still remains a non-member (Dutta, 2011: 501). Thus, SAARC can adopt the same pattern. However, unlike in ASEAN in which the majority of the members want to keep China out, in SAARC half the members are openly advocating China's entry, and as a result, keeping China outside of the membership might not be possible in the long run. Fifth, it is also argued that China's entry will undermine India's influence/dominance in SAARC, like it has successfully done to Russia in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). For example, China has become the largest trading partner for Central Asian countries (excluding Uzbekistan) and its investment stood at US$45 billion

(2012), more than Russia (Sharma, 2015). Thus, China has been successful in reducing Russia's economic dominance in Central Asian countries, and this might be replicated also in SAARC. Sixth, another strong argument has been that China will work towards curtailing India's interest. For example, China has consistently tried to block India's entry into several forums in the Asian region, such as ASEAN, ASEAN Region Forum (ARF) and East Asian Summit (EAS). But, many argue that in SAARC, decisions are based on unanimity, so India still can veto China entry. Moreover, China invited India to participate in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in 2014 and has been supporting India in deepening its partnership with the SCO. At the same time, India could not prevent China's entry as observer member, as India wanted Afghanistan to be a SAARC member. Pakistan was opposed to Afghanistan's entry; hence, as a tactical compromise, India had to allow China's observer membership in SAARC.

Nevertheless, India has hitherto successfully blocked China's attempt to become a full-fledged member of SAARC, on the grounds that SAARC needs to work towards strengthening its ties with new partners, rather than expanding membership. In March 2014, Salman Khrushid, India's former Minister for External Affairs, emphasised at the SAARC foreign ministers' meeting in Male, Maldives, that "some of the observer states have done commendable work with our association, but it is important that we define a clear set of policies and objectives for these relationships and their future direction, before we move further" (Kasturi, 2014). Moreover, India is concerned about China's growing influence in the region and China's entry into SAARC will naturally reduce India's leverage, which currently is strong within this grouping. Thus, India believes, if China becomes member of SAARC, then it would obviously undermine India's interest and complicate SAARC.

4. Factors Favouring China's Membership

Despite the reservation from India over China becoming a member, sooner or later China will become a member and it will be beneficial for India as well as for the growth of SAARC. Some of the vital factors favouring China are as follows.

First, from time to time, several Chinese leaders and scholars have argued that China is closely connected to South Asia in terms of geographical proximity, strong socio-economic engagement, political interactions, and historical links. In other words, China is not an extra-regional power, but can become a legitimate member.

Second, India's attempt to contain China's growing influence in SAARC has been counterproductive. The more India is opposing, China continues to garner more support in its favour. Subsequently, except for India, no other

members, including observer members such as the US, the EU, Japan, Iran or Australia have opposed China's enhanced role in SAARC. At the 2011 summit in the Maldives, due to pressure from other members, India had to settle for a "comprehensive review" of its engagement with observer states, including the prospect of dialogue partnership (*DNA*, 2014). Thus, it has become difficult for India to keep China out of the SAARC forum.

Third, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have made their support clear for China's membership at every SAARC summit in recent years and Pakistan will be hosting the 2015 SAARC summit, which will be a testing ground for India to oppose China's membership. Apparently, Nepal's support was particularly visible at the 18th SAARC summit in November 2014, where Nepal's Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat stated, "Over the course of time, [China] should become a full-fledged member"; former Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey argued that "China's active presence in SAARC will increase its importance and the speed of development in Asia. We should not keep China as an observer only" (Roy and Yubaraj, 2014). The *Asia Pacific Daily*, published by the Xinhua news agency, Kathmandu bureau, brought out a 12-page special edition for the 18th SAARC summit in which at least three Nepal cabinet ministers and two former foreign ministers supported Beijing's case (*ibid*). More recently, at the International Conference organised by the think tanks in Pakistan, China's full membership for the growth of SAARC were widely advocated (*The Express Tribune*, 2015). Hence, even without the presence of China, many SAARC members speak in favour of China's membership. Given this scenario, it does not seem a diplomatic option for India to block China's enhanced role in SAARC for much longer.

Fourth, within India itself, opinion is growing in favour of China's membership in SAARC. For instance, Subramanian Swamy, a senior BJP leader, delivering the Lalith Athulathmudali Memorial Lecture at Colombo in November 2014, argued that SAARC "should have China as a full-time member … without including bilateral issues in the agenda and bringing China into the association, it is a sheer waste of time speaking about SAARC" (*The Sunday Times*, 2014). Although, the Narendra Modi government may not officially endorse China's bid, but its key members are in favour of it, indicating the growing support for China's candidature. Moreover, Former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh talks about "Chindia" (China+India) as a partnership that would benefit the region. Hence, China's SAARC membership would be the testing ground for this premise.

Fifth, China is currently the largest trading partner for South Asian countries. It has a Free Trade Arrangement (FTA) with Pakistan and negotiations are in progress with Sri Lanka for a similar understanding. Moreover, China's trade with South Asia has substantially increased to US$93 billion in 2012, with imports from the region at US$22.6 billion and

exports to the region at 3.44 per cent (Xinhuanet, 2014). China's investments in SAARC countries are about US$4 billion and China's former Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin announced at the SAARC summit (November 2014) an investment of US$45.6 billion for an economic corridor with Pakistan and promised to take trade between South Asia and China to US$150 billion and investment to US$30 billion in the next five years (Kondapalli, 2014; Chansoria, 2015). Furthermore, China and SAARC's economic integration will create a huge market with 2.8 billion people, enhancing industrialisation, increasing employment, capital and infrastructure development. Thus, China's growing economic engagement with the SAARC region is certainly a matter to be noted in its favour, which will be beneficial for economic integration of SAARC.

Sixth, China has been adducing initiatives at successive SAARC summits that are attractive and beneficial for SAARC and the region. Among these are: the BCIM economic corridor; China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; the MSR; the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the establishment of a US$40 billion fund to facilitate infrastructure projects for the Silk Road initiative. China's former Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin has also spoken about the "One Belt, One Road" programme that offers US$30 billion for construction of roads in the region. These programmes have received positive response from the SAARC members. For instance, Nepalese Foreign Minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey in March 2015, stated "Nepal will join the Silk Road Economic Belt as it has great significance to Nepal as it will enhance connectivity and take Nepal-China relations to a new height" (Xinhua, 2015). Similarly, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Pakistan have already extended support for China MSR initiatives. In addition, the Chinese government announced 10,000 scholarships, 5,000 training opportunities, exchange programmes for 5,000 youths, and sending 5,000 Chinese-language teachers to South Asian countries in the next five years (Zongyi, 2014). Furthermore, China has already been playing an active role in power projects, transportation, and other infrastructure construction overseas, particularly in developing countries. This Chinese eagerness for engaging with the region becomes more meaningful with the cooperation of SAARC.

Seventh, although India opposes China's full membership in SAARC, it has been successful in strengthening its bilateral ties with China and is a partner with China in BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa), Group of 20 (G-20) and Group of 4 (G-4) groupings. Moreover, just as China is keen on becoming a SAARC member, India is campaigning to become a full-fledged member of the SCO. In this context, President Xi Jinping had said that "China welcomes and supports India's full membership in SCO, as it expects India to support China in building relations with SAARC so that our two countries can work together and contribute our due share to regional stability

and development" (Liu, 2014). Moreover, both China and India are playing a pro-active role in establishing the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor, which will link Kolkata (capital of West Bengal) with Kunming (capital of Yunnan province), passing through Mandalay in Myanmar and Dhaka in Bangladesh. This project aims to improve the connectivity, infrastructure, energy resources, agriculture, trade [also intra-regional trade] and investment and will naturally bring about socio-economic development in the region (Sahoo and Bhunai, 2014). Thus, with joint initiatives and partnership, India can seek to utilise this opportunity as a diplomatic *quid pro quo* with China.

Eighth, most of the SAARC members are convinced that development of infrastructure in the region is a key to its growth. As a result, the theme of the 18th SAARC summit was "deeper integration for peace and prosperity." Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a pitch for connectivity in the region and emphasised that "infrastructure is our region's greatest weakness and it is most pressing need" (Kumar, 2014). He also emphasised that coming to an agreement on energy, infrastructure and resolving shared problems would strengthen SAARC. Ironically, this summit failed to come to any significant agreement on road and rail connectivity. Thus, India needs to concede that it alone cannot carry forward SAARC; therefore, China's entry into SAARC could be a great source of help in taking forward these objectives and China has already invested in the region, especially in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan, clearly demonstrating its potential.

Ninth, China's elevation in SAARC will also be beneficial to smaller countries like Bhutan and Maldives, as they will have new opportunities to take their relations with China to the next level, thereby strengthening their ties with China and resolve the border disputes (this applies particularly to Bhutan).

5. India's Major Concerns

For India, China has been an inconvenient neighbour and a major security concern – as for several decades, China was supporting anti-India movements; hampering India's interests in most of the region; questioning Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim as being part of the sovereign territory of India; and adamantly refusing to resolve border disputes (Malone and Mukherjee, 2010; Dutta, 2011a). It is to be expected that these bilateral irritants could have an impact on the working of SAARC.

SAARC decisions are based on unanimity. A corollary is that, as a full-fledged SAARC member, China could obstruct key projects beneficial to India. A preview of this possibility was presented in 2009, when China successfully protested against the Asian Development Bank (ADB) US$2.9

billion loan-funding plan to India for a water management project in Arunachal Pradesh (Chansoria, 2015). Four years later, in 2013, the Indian government was forced yet again to drop Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim from a World Bank loan proposal to avoid running into Chinese objections over multilateral financial aid for border-area projects such as strengthening electricity transmission and distribution in India's north-eastern region.

This kind of Chinese obstructionist behaviour has been seen in ASEAN as well. For instance, China successfully blocked a resolution on the South China Sea dispute in June 2012 through Cambodia, its new-found ally. In that event, the ASEAN summit, for the first time in its 45-year history, closed without issuing a joint communiqué, due to Cambodia disallowing other countries from presenting their arguments. Rubbing salt into the wound, the former Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi declared that there was "no dispute" about China's sovereignty over the reef and warned against internationalising the issue (Ranade, 2012). Given this historical experience, India needs to be on guard about Chinese intentions where India's interests are concerned within the ambit of SAARC.

Of particular concern for India would be China's "all-weather friendship" with Pakistan. China has not only strengthened its military and nuclear ties with Pakistan, it is also a key investor in infrastructure projects there, which have security implications for India. More recently, during Chinese President Xi Jinping visit to Islamabad in April 2015, he signed 51 agreements (MOU)[1] and also unveiled the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC) – a US$46 billion infrastructure project for Pakistan – which would open up new trade and transport routes across Asia and also counter US dominance in the region (Fazil, 2015). The proposed corridor will run from Kashgar in China to the Gwadar port in Pakistan. This project is considered to be a game changer for both countries as the project would economically benefit the poorest province in Pakistan and will provide China another access route to Indian Ocean and the Middle East region. However, India's point of view is focused on security concerns, as the arteries of CPEC will originate in Gilgit Baltistan, in a way China legitimating Pakistan's claim and control over the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK) (Singh, 2015).[2] Thus, these growing relations are a symbol of strong friendship between China and Pakistan, which will have an impact on SAARC growth and also on the decisions taken at SAARC meetings. In addition, China's deepening ties with Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka lead to the apprehension that a multivariate triangle or a more complex alignment involving China, and targeting India's interests could develop in the region, such as China-Pakistan-Nepal, China-Pakistan-Nepal-Bangladesh, China-Pakistan-Nepal-Bangladesh-Sri Lanka or any of their variations. Thus, China's strong ties with SAARC countries will have an impact on India's strategic interest in SAARC.

In addition, China's economic dominance will bring about certain challenges, such as: the region will have to confront the challenge posed by Chinese exports. Inevitably, these are going to impinge upon local manufacturing. In consequence, the weaker economies are likely to go under and become, essentially, exporters of raw materials (Dutta, 2011: 500), like what has happened to Central Asian countries. Resultantly, there will be a rise of trade imbalance. SAARC countries' total trade deficit with China in 2012 was more than US$47.8 billion, out of a total trade of US$73.9 billion, and of which India accounted for more than US$30 billion (Zongyi, 2014). China's investment, aid and loan in the region have also thrown up challenges. In Sri Lanka, for example, many argue that China's interest rates for infrastructure loans, ranging from 1.53 to 6.5 per cent, are much higher than rates from the World Bank and ADB (*Tamil Guardian*, 2014). Moreover, the current 42 projects employ more than 1,700 Chinese workers and conservative estimates are that 25,000 Chinese workers are in various projects in Sri Lanka (Hariharan, 2013). Obviously, this phenomenon denies job opportunities for Sri Lankan labourers and there is also the prospect that many Chinese labourers might stay on in the country, causing security concerns for the Sri Lankan government. Hence, SAARC member countries need to reflect whether they need to have this scenario reflected in their own territories.

In a nutshell, China's membership into SAARC will bring both benefits and challenges. Nevertheless, before allowing China's membership it is important for the SAARC members to assess in what ways China will help SAARC in terms of investment, aid, infrastructure and building people to people contact? Whether China's entry will be worthwhile or will its expected domination further reduce the credibility and functioning of SAARC? What are the areas in which both India and China can cooperate for the benefit of SAARC? Hence, it is necessary for the policy makers in India and also SAARC members to make a cost-benefit analysis, before expanding its membership – inclusion of China, as its entry may transform SAARC in either a positive or negative way, which will have vast impact on the region in general and India in particular. However, the general trend seems to suggest that it is inevitable that China will become a SAARC member at some time in the future, for which India has to be prepared.

India has to intelligently and sophisticatedly play its cards to advance its own interests in SAARC and ensure China's entry does not weaken regionalism in the region. First, India needs to further enhance its ties with China, which is already happening, as the Modi-led government has given due importance to China, with the hosting of the visiting Chinese President in 2014, followed by his own visit (May 2015). Both countries agreed to work jointly with Nepal for its "reconstruction, rehabilitation and development endeavours, respecting the country's sovereignty and independence" (Giri,

2014). Subsequently, Modi also emphasised that "wherever possible and feasible, we should work together, as we did in responding to the earthquake in Nepal" (*ibid*). As a result, both India and China can work for a win-win situation in SAARC, which will be mutually beneficial and also for SAARC. Second, although, China is unlikely to be made a full member soon, however India should take the lead in inviting China to become a full member of SAARC, which will send a positive signal and eliminate the rift among the SAARC members over China's membership. At the same time, India should also insist that other Observer members like Myanmar and Japan be made full members along with China; this will act as a strategy to counterweight China's role in SAARC. Third, India should regain the strategic space in countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles to counter Chinese interest in the Indian Ocean region. This is already happening, as during Prime Minister Modi's visit in March 2015 to these countries, he offered many military, defence and civilian assistance to reduce these countries dependence on China. Finally, it is in India and China's interests to cooperate in this grouping to maximise its economic, energy and other strategic interests and also to promote and establish peace and security in the South Asian region.

Notes

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1.   For details of the agreements see Haider, Mateen and Haider, Irfan (2015), "Economic corridor in Focus as Pakistan, China sign MOUs", *DAWN (Islamabad)*, 20 April 2015, at <*www.dawn.com/news/1177109*>.

2.   In the Gilgit Baltistan segment, the CPEC project includes – expansion of the Karakoram Highway, establishing industrial parks in special economic zones, constructing hydropower projects, railway line and road building. The project also entails building hydropower projects and motorways and highways in the POK. See Singh, 2015.

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Explorations into White Australia's Sense of Superiority over Chinese

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Abstract

Although China has risen to be the second largest world economy, and played a vital role in the biggest economic boom Australia had experience since the 1850s gold rush, White Australia's feeling of superiority over Chinese lingers. This article explores how and why this prejudice manifest itself in contemporary Australia by examining the social, cultural, and historical background of Australian racism. I will also examine the elements of contemporary Chinese culture that may have contributed to this sentiment. Finally, factors for reducing White Australia's racial discrimination over the Chinese are discussed.

Keywords: *White Australia, racism, racial discrimination, racial superiority, Chinese inferiority, cultural superiority, ethnocentrism*

1. Introduction

A literature review reveals that most studies and news coverage about Australia's ethnic issues about Chinese people and culture looked into racial discrimination, but few focused on the feeling of Australian superiority over the Chinese (Belot, 2015; Berman and The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2008; Booth, Leigh and Varganova, 2011; Cal, 2012; Coorey and Walker, 2014; K.M. Dunn, 2003; Kelley, 2011; Loosemore and Chau, 2002; Mak and Nesdale, 2001; Miller, 2011; Teo, 2012; I. Walker, 2001). One empirical study (S. Li, 2013) raised an alarm bell. It involved a group of 13 Australian high school teachers of Anglo-Celtic background who took part in an in-country language and culture program in China for three weeks in 2011. Of their 11 reflective diaries required as part of their assessments and given consent for research purposes, only two admitted the existence of benevolence to some extent, in particular in an established friendship, nine expressed a feeling of superiority over Chinese people, with

one saying "on the whole the Chinese give the impression of being rude and noisy", and another announced that "the Chinese are a rude race" (p. 38). As current and prospective Chinese language teachers in Australian schools, the impact of these teachers' attitudes about Chinese people and culture on the young generations of Australians whom they will be educating cannot be underestimated. It could be judgmental to claim this is typical of all Australians, but the reasons behind their attitudes towards the Chinese need to be identified, described, and explained. Prior to examining the feeling of Australia's superiority over the Chinese, it is necessary to first distinguish the difference between racial superiority and racial discrimination.

Racial superiority is the ideological root of racial discrimination, while the latter is an enactment of the former, together they form the two integral parts of racism. The latter often draws most public attention and can be unveiled and judged by law. Examples of racism include assault, verbal abuse, and lower pay rates or employment benefits. Racial superiority is an attitude, characterised by contempt or condescension, which draws little attention from researchers and public media in light of its veiled nature and the legal difficulties in proving that an offence has been committed. This feeling of racial superiority may manifest itself, for example, by looking at a Chinese person in a contemptuous manner; being condescending or talking down to them as if they are of different intellectual level; or not showing them the same courtesies accorded to other White Australian. Due to the nature of racial superiority, unveiled and legal if not enacted into racial discrimination, this kind of attitude can be equally humiliating spiritually and on a much larger scale. As racial superiority in Australia is traceable back to the White Australia Policy, White Australia's superiority should be a proper term for racial superiority in the Australian context.

Despite little research and few news reports on White Australia's superiority, it is reasonable to assume that the number of people who hold such attitude without manifesting them is conceivably larger than those who have enacted it. A telephone survey in 2003 provided such empirical support. The telephone survey of 5056 residents from different ethnic groups in the states of Queensland and NSW revealed that 83 per cent of respondents admitted racism is a problem in Australia. Twelve per cent of Australians admitted candidly that they were racist (K.M. Dunn, 2003). Evidently, from crime figures, most of these self-confessed racists have not committed an offence, or perhaps these have not been reported. They may not have had an opportunity or lack the courage to commit a crime. Thus it can be concluded that White Australia's superiority is more widespread than racial discrimination. Of course, White Australia's superiority does not specifically target Chinese people. However, as one of the two largest victims of racial discrimination in Australian history (the other group being

indigenous Australians) and the largest Australian minorities accounting for 4.3 per cent of its overall population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013), the Chinese ethnic group is the main target of White Australia's superiority. The following example provides a view to the subtlety of White Australia's superiority occurring in daily life. On the 8th September, 2010 *Cairns Post*, a newspaper article titled "In CHINA Syndrome – Our Newest Market But Are We Letting Them Down?" reported a series of public lectures organised for tourism practitioners about the understanding of Chinese tourists' behaviours. In these lectures, an Australian expert with an Anglo-Celtic name, in giving some Chinese cultural tips, stressed that pushing in was a normal habit in China, as it was the only way people could get served; he added that this should be respected. Superiority was carefully veiled in his accommodating attitude. In sum, White Australia's superiority is veiled and could be more widespread than realised.

Compared to White Australia's superiority, racial discrimination, the enacted White Australia's superiority, continues to linger, though the policy of multiculturalism has been established and Australians in general appear to behave in a friendly and polite manner. News coverage and studies suggest that the Australian melting pot is not as successful as thought. On 11th October 1988, the *Herald Sun*'s article "Union's plea: racism not all right on site" revealed that Asian workers were forced to eat in separate locations and work longer hours, and "cheated" out of legal rights to employment benefits and compensation, fair rates of pay, and safe working conditions. Of those workers, most were Chinese. In 2007, a large-scale field experiment to measure labour market discrimination in Australia found clear evidence of discrimination against Chinese and Middle Easterners. The researchers randomly submitted over 4000 fictional applications for entry-level jobs, varying only the name as an indicator of ethnicity. They found that Chinese and Middle Easterners submitted at least 50 per cent more applications in order to receive the same number of call-backs as Anglo candidates (Booth *et al.*, 2011). Most recently, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government was found guilty of racial discrimination for rejecting the internship application of a 51-year-old Chinese migrant with a master's degree in neurology and 17 years of professional experience (Belot, 2015). Such cases of discrimination against ethnic minorities, Chinese particularly, at work places were disclosed in other reports (see e.g. Berman and The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2008; Healy, 2010; I. Walker, 2001).

Racial discrimination may also express itself as resentment towards the new rich. The *Sydney Morning Herald* (Cal, 2012) reported that on a Sydney train on 23rd April 2012, two Chinese international students were robbed and assaulted by a group of teenagers believing they had money. On 18th August

2014 on an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) TV program, Clive Palmer, Australian mining magnate and the leader of the Palmer United Party in the Australian Federal Government, labelled his Chinese business partners "mongrels" and "bastards" over a dispute about his election campaign funds, though he soon diverted it to the Chinese Communist Party Government (Coorey and Walker, 2014). All these studies and reports indicate that White Australia's superiority, which drives racial discrimination, is clear and present in an unveiled form.

To counter White Australia's superiority and racial discrimination, the Australian Government has not responded adequately. In 2011, the Australian Government continued to ignore a call made on 30th June 2011 from the Chinese-Australian community to apologise for discrimination inflicted on their forebears some one hundred years ago (Kelley, 2011; Miller, 2011). This was in the wake of the Chinese in New Zealand in 2002, Canada in 2006 and California in 2009 receiving apologies and reparations for discriminatory policies, and also following Kevin Rudd's apology to the Australian Aboriginal people in February 2008. The Government's cold-shoulder towards the Chinese minority may be due to financial and political considerations, and is not indicative of the Government's sense of superiority over Chinese. This does nevertheless indicate that the Australian Government has not made the utmost effort to wipe out racial superiority and racial discrimination.

Having elaborated on the current situation of White Australia's superiority and its enacted form, racial discrimination, we now turn to the exploration of its root causes. White Australia's superiority may have many roots, politically, economically, socially, culturally, and even in language. This article focuses on its social and cultural sources. To expose the reasons that lie behind the veiled White Australia's superiority over Chinese, constructivism, the anthropologist view of culture, and racism will first be addressed in order to establish a theoretical basis; then Australia's history of racial discrimination will be revisited to examine its social and cultural roots; followed by the reflection of relevant elements of contemporary Chinese culture that may nurture this sentiment. Finally, factors to reduce White Australia's superiority are discussed.

2. Theoretical Framework

The socio-cultural constructivist view is adopted for examining the social and cultural roots of White Australia's superiority. Constructivism holds that individuals and social activity bear the socially and culturally situated nature, and is the outset of cognitive processes (Cobb, 1996). In Vygotsky's (1979) words, the individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary to its social and cultural dimension. According to constructivism,

White Australia's superiority was only able to develop in its specific social and cultural settings. Without this unique social and cultural background, White Australia's superiority would not have existed. Therefore, examining the social and cultural elements that bred this mentality holds the key to understanding it.

Margaret Mead's (1942/1943) anthropological view of culture echoes the constructivist view on White Australia's superiority from a cultural perspective. Margaret Mead states that "(w)e are our culture" (p. 21) and argues that it is "not blood, but upbringing which determines all of … [our] way of behaving" (p. 20). In this sense, culture is the attribute of the community or country in which we grew up, so that whatever we may be in the future and whichever community or country we may end up in, we are still of our own culture. This view of culture underscores the uniqueness of people who are brought up in particular communities, and this distinguishes them from other communities or countries. The anthropological view of culture further indicates the importance of external environments in developing human behaviour.

To discuss the development of human behaviour, we cannot avoid the topic of nature versus nurture that centres on the relative contributions of genetic inheritance and external factors to human development. A review of the research literature shows that although the field of behavioural genetics has demonstrated the importance of heritability to intelligence and personality, external factors play an important part in these psychological traits and the shaping of one's behaviour (J. Dunn and Plomin, 1990; Hergenhahn, 2005; Steen, 1996). This conclusion furthers the anthropological view of culture that one's behaviour is nurtured by environmental factors or shaped by the community in which one is brought up.

Constructivism and the anthropological view of culture squarely repudiate the rationale of racism that the white race is more civilised. It is necessary to briefly review what are the arguments that justified racism and refute them. The late eighteenth century's industrial revolution equipped western European countries with clearly advanced technologies and economies. With the power of science seeming to confer legitimacy, the idea of race appeared a credible way of thinking about people and the differences between the white, and the black and coloured races (Stocking, 1968/1982). Theodore Roosevelt, America's 26th President (1901-1909) once proclaimed that if a "lower" race had impressive industrial and military capacity, this would mean that they were civilised: "We should then simply be dealing with another civilised nation of non-Aryan blood" (cited from D. Walker, 1999, p. 47). The correlation between cause and effect for evolution between advanced technology and a superior, civilised race seemed to have been well established. Racism became the pretext for colonisation in the 19th century –

to bring the benefits of civilisation to "savage natives", and in World War II to purify the gene pool. With the former constantly meeting with local national liberation movements and the latter resulting in huge tolls in human lives and assets, racism created human disasters rather than a peaceful and civilised world. In the meantime, racism has been seriously challenged by the rising Asian countries. In the late 19th century, Japan became an industrial country. In the 60s and 70s of the last century, the four Little Asian Tigers (Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) created an economic miracle. In 2008, China became the second largest economy in the world after only thirty years' reform. According to the latest Bloomberg Rankings on innovation (2014), out of the top ten innovative countries in total scores, four countries or regions are from Asia, namely, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan, with South Korea ranking the first. In its sub-rankings of High-tech Density, China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, came 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 8th, respectively. The rise of Asia technologically and economically has proved racism theoretically groundless. Therefore, technology and economic development are not related to race at all, and race has nothing to do with civilisation.

With the theoretical support of constructivism and the anthropological view of culture, and knowledge about the cause of racism bankruptcy, we are now in a better position to explore how White Australia's superiority was developed in its social and cultural setting.

3. Social and Cultural Roots of Racial Discrimination in Australia

Australia is seen as a vulnerable, under-populated nation. Located in the Pacific Ocean, closest to Asia, and at the centre of great strategic risk of conflict between West and East, Australia is a so-called outpost of Europe. With the influx of Chinese migrant labourers during the gold rush in the 1850s, the result of China being invaded by Britain in 1848 and forced to open its door to Western powers, suspicion, fear and enmity has grown among many Australians. "Chinese were regarded as frugal and would eke out a livelihood in circumstances few Europeans would endure, which it was feared would pose a threat to the working conditions and wages of Australians" (D. Walker, 1999, p. 36). It is against this background that systematic discrimination against Chinese, regarded as lesser human beings, continued for nearly 120 years until 1973 when the White Australia Policy was abolished.

In 1855, the first *Chinese Exclusion Act* was passed in Victoria, stipulating that a ship with ten gross tonnage capacity could only permit one Chinese passenger; this was later increased to five hundred gross tonnage capacity permitting one person. Resentment among white labourers in the New South Wales gold mines gave rise to the Lambing Flat Riots in 1861 when Chinese workers were driven out of the mines by European settlers.

Soon after, parliaments in other states and territories, including New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory, passed similar acts to the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. This occurred in the 1870s and 1880s when social Darwinism prevailed in Australia providing it a world view which gave race the primacy of place (Broome, 1994). These acts applied a head tax to Chinese entering Australia as well as regulated the number of Chinese passengers a ship was allowed to carry. These acts led to the passage of the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*, also called the White Australia Policy. Although the White Australia Policy was said to restrict non-white immigration to Australia with a dictation test, it mainly targeted Chinese ethnic groups. There was great concern regarding the abundance of the natural resources of Australia and a determination to prevent these resources from being shared with the Chinese in light of the size of the Chinese population in Australia (Li, 1895). Even after World War II, under economic imperatives, population-hungry Australia still only opened its gate to European settlers under an ethnocentric slogan, "Populate or Perish"; the aim being to fill Australia with Europeans or else risk having it overrun by Asians (Strahan, 1996). In the 1960s, when the Australian Government had to choose between a rising Asia, the objectionable image of discrimination in the world, and lack of population for social and economic survival and development, restrictions on people based on their origin began to be repealed. It was not until 1973 when the White Australia Policy was finally abolished.

From the mid-19th century up to 1973, hatred and fear of the Chinese became the social and cultural atmosphere of the times and Chinese immigrants suffered varying degrees of hostility and denigration. Most of the known vices were attributed to Chinese, often portrayed as gamblers, drug addicts, and moral degenerates with disease. For example, in the novel *White or Yellow* (2011) written by William Lane, a writer and a powerful figure in the Australian Labour movement in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Chinese men were portrayed as typically complex, sensual and calculating. Their internalised world was one of debasement and moral pollution, where lusts were nourished by fantasies of racial domination and fuelled by never-to-be-forgotten humiliations at the hands of Europeans. When William saw a white girl ruined by opium, seen living with Chinese in a cramped, foul smelling room in an opium den near Brisbane's Queen Street, he was so outraged as to destroy every opium den he could find, and drive out the Chinese. This novel deliberately ignore the fact that it was the British who brought opium to China, forcing the Qing Dynasty to open its doors for trade. This triggered a series of wars over the Qing Dynasty by the Western powers that caused the Chinese to flee to Australia and other countries.

Under the impact of racial discrimination policies, in particular the White Australian Policy, not only did the Chinese suffer a huge numerical loss due

to discriminative laws, they were also forcibly separated from their families. By the end of the 1930s, the Chinese-born, who once formed the largest of the non-European groups, had declined by more than 56 per cent (Palfreeman, 1967). The administration of the White Australia Policy, due to the tyrannies of petty officialdom, exercised power in a capricious manner (Markus, 2004). The following example may help better understand the situation Chinese people were subjected to. According to *The Sydney World Newspaper* on 21st September 1932 a young Queensland woman married a Chinese man in Townsville and went with him to China where she was treated badly by her husband and his family. After having a baby, the woman was forced to work in the rice fields like a "coolie" and it was said that she lived under conditions that "an Australian would scorn to allot to a diseased dog" and that her child was taken away by her husband's Chinese wife. Eventually, the woman was rescued from China. Yet the surviving documents, personal letters and photos suggested a different scenario. The woman loved her husband, and her husband had a deep affection for her. The only unpleasantness she experienced was the jealousy of her husband's Chinese wife towards her new-born baby. She spoke publicly about her experiences in an attempt to counter what the press were saying about her and her family and implored the Australian Government to allow her husband to return to reunite with her and their child in Australia. However, Government officials and the press dismissed the genuineness of her feelings and desires, and did not make allowances for her plight of not having her husband around to support the family (Sleeman, 1933).

Establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China in December 1972 brought an end to the White Australia Policy in the following year, and ushered in dramatic changes to bilateral relations in economy, science, education and culture; yet White Australia's superiority lingers. In the late 1990s, by advocating an end to multiculturalism and a revival of Anglo-Celtic cultural traditions, Pauline Hanson was elected to the Australian Federal Parliament. In 1998, her One Nation Party won nearly one quarter of the votes in the Queensland state election. Pauline Hanson's popularity, though just for a few years, shows that racial supremacy was still evident in some, in particular the lower and middle classes, who were unhappy with multiculturalism where Asians were perceived as exploiting the wealth of Australians. "The Pauline Hanson outburst of the 1990s shows that the racism so malignant in the 19th Century Australia still festers in some" (Ewins, 2006, p. 356).

4. Nurtured by Contemporary Chinese Culture

Contemporary Chinese culture is a mixture of conflicting ideologies drawn from Communism, traditional Chinese culture, and Western values (Guo, 2012), which may be a hindrance than help in countering White Australia's

superiority. This section will explain why contemporary Chinese culture may have contributed to the nurturing of White Australia's superiority. First, we need to look at what are the major characteristics of contemporary Chinese culture.

Perhaps, the most recent catchword in China, "having money, being wilful" (*youqian, renxing* in Chinese) best represents contemporary Chinese culture which is a result of authority by men with the conflicting ideologies of communism, traditional Chinese culture and Western values. On one hand, the main tenets of communism such as class struggle and egalitarianism practised in the first 30 years of the Mao era was covertly abandoned and replaced by once-denounced traditional Confucian harmony and hierarchy in the latter 30 years of reform. And the Party publicly advocates the capitalist "to get rich is glorious" while, in the meantime, censoring Western values of democracy and liberty. As a result, people are left with no faith but the intention to make money. On the other hand, despite being a self-proclaimed legal society, the Chinese Communist Party put its interests above the law and the people. Party officials and associates willfully bend the rules to pursue corrupted gains. They indulged in illegal business practices and production of counterfeit and shoddy merchandise, paying little regard to health or environmental regulations, resulting in contaminated food and polluted environments.

With no faith and a "money talks" philosophy contemporary China has descended into a broad and deep moral crisis. People care for nothing but their personal wellbeing. Lack of trust and care is pervasive in the society. People dare not help an elderly person who has fallen in the street for fear of being extorted. Some people spit, litter on the street, jump the queue, talk loudly in public places… (Guo, 2004: "The moral crisis in China: Part I – Seven areas that showcase China's moral crisis", 2012: "The moral crisis in China: Part II – Traditional Chinese culture", 2012: "The moral crisis in China: Part III – How the Communist Party destroyed the Chinese spirit", Si, 2010; Xu, 2014; Yeung, 2011; Zha, 1995).

Moral crisis tarnishes the once splendid Chinese culture and feeds White Australia's sense of superiority. Not only do Anglo-Celtic Australians develop superiority after their visits to China, as described above, but those who has little contact with Chinese may also develop a sense of superiority by interacting with Chinese tourists or observe their impolite behaviours such as the aforementioned cultural tip about Chinese pushing in the *Cairns Post*. Sadly, it may eventuate that as contact with the Chinese increases, White Australia's sense of superiority also worsen. The Lowy Institute Poll in 2014 may be a reflection of this mentality with Australians' favourable feelings towards Chinese reported as being 7 per cent lower than their feelings towards the Japanese (Oliver, 2014).

The fact that some individual Chinese look up to Westerners or white people and worship things Western may further heighten White Australia's sense of superiority. The mentality of some Chinese who look down upon their own but look up to Westerners stealthily made a comeback after the reform. The following four examples may give a good understanding of this mentality. In 1999, an incident stirred up public sentiment; an overseas Chinese reported that on the 18th August at the Baijia supermarket in Shanghai, Chinese customers with bags were refused entry while Westerners were seen sauntering in with bags. When the Chinese went to complain, the manager responded: "That is because Chinese are of poor moral fibre, whereas foreigners are of better moral fibre" (Gu, 1999, p. 88). This ignited public anger. One said that was reminiscent of the notorious placard in the old semi-colonised China, hung up by the gate of Huangpu Park, which said "No Admittance to Chinese and Dogs". On the 14th May 2012, when a Russian cellist refused to withdraw his bare feet placed on the front seatback, and insulted a women passenger in Chinese, a train police officer who later arrived on the scene reportedly told the woman, "Forget it. He is an artist" (Xinhua, 2012). On 17th February 2012, according to Central China Radio, Chinese police found the lost bike of a Japanese man within 24 hours in Wuhan. The *Southern Metropolis Daily* reported that on 4th January 2014, the police helped find the lost bag of a Canadian left in a cab in Guangzhou within 20 minutes. These occurrences caused lamentation among Chinese netizens who wished they could receive the same treatment. The comments made later by the Japanese traveller who lost his bicycle may give some insight of this mentality:

> A situation I came across many times, in particular in small cities. When I bought things in a small shop, perhaps due to my appearance and also my effort to use Chinese language to ask: "I want this", the shop owner's attitudes were very bad and impatient, sometimes, might urge me: "leave quickly if do not buy". Then I switched to Japanese. When they found I was a foreigner, their attitudes changed dramatically, not only being warm and also asking me where I came from and went to, and showed me directions. Perhaps my identity of foreigner did help a lot. So later on I started to use Japanese to say hello first.
>
> Although in Japan, we are very nice to foreigners, but also nice to each other. However, Chinese are extraordinarily nicer to foreigners and I wish Chinese would be nicer to each other. (Z. Li, 2012)

In fact, idolising Westerners happens in China as well as in Australia. It is not unusual to see whites receive better service than Chinese at shops and restaurants run by Chinese.

Besides looking up to Westerners, other actions such as worshiping Australian goods, Chinese women marrying white men and Chinese girls making their faces look more Western may also nourish White Australia's

superiority. In October 2007, an online survey of 2563 respondents conducted by the *Chinese Youth Daily* in conjunction with Sina, one of the largest Chinese media companies, showed that 59.2 per cent of Chinese youth had an inclination to worship things Western (Xiao and Zhou, 2012). Things seem to have become worse in recent years due to ceaseless food contamination scandals. Chinese prefer to buy Australian-made goods such as milk powder, fruits, and wine. In addition, mixed marriages of Chinese females marrying Australian-born men accounted for as much as 15 per cent of the total number of Chinese women married in Australia over the last five years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014) (though this percentage included Australian-born Chinese), according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Some Chinese girls are also opting for plastic surgery to make them look more Western ("Plastic surgery so drastic they can't get past airport security! How Chinese women are flying to South Korea for a more 'Western' face," 2014). These cultural trends may further nurture White Australia's superiority.

Last but not least, the Chinese thinking of "saving face" (*mianzi*) in Australia may also indulge White Australia's superiority. A low level of explicit racial discrimination was found in Mak and Nesdale's (2001) self-reported survey of 372 ethnic Chinese migrants in Australia, because "some Chinese respondents may find it embarrassing to admit to being a target of racial discrimination…. Indeed, humiliating experiences … are often associated with shame and guilt among the Chinese" (p. 2643). Mak and Chan (1995) believe it is a typical Chinese way of dealing with these incidents, that is to try to keep them within the family. The Chinese thinking of "saving face" prevent them from taking up the challenge and actively engaging themselves in challenging White Australia's superiority.

In sum, the elements of contemporary Chinese culture, featuring moral crisis, looking up to Westerners, worshiping things Western, Chinese females marrying Australian men, and also some Chinese females craving for Western appearances, may play an important role in nurturing White Australia's sense of superiority.

5. Discussion

White Australia's superiority over Chinese was developed through its unique social and cultural background in history and is further nurtured by some elements of contemporary Chinese culture. Is it possible to eradicate it? Perhaps yes, but will it be an easy undertaking? In this section, strategies aimed at reducing White Australia's superiority will be discussed, in terms of education, communication, and development of China.

Education will help tackle its social, cultural, and language roots. Education refers to school and university education including Chinese language

and culture studies. Through education, people would become more cultured, leading to a change in habits and behaviour, in turn becoming more civilised. It is noted that ignorance has been a common cause of conflict throughout the history of mankind (UNESCO, 1951). Perhaps, with proper school and university education, Pauline Hanson would have found a skilled job and would not have found herself so racist. Through education, people can acknowledge the distinctiveness of other cultures and be made aware that culture is an active process. Societies have always been open to external influences and ideas and are in constant change. Since you cannot find two Indians who tell a story alike (Stocking, 1996), internal diversity of culture may be noted through education. Differences could be the outcome of habitual practice.

With the rise of China, the importance of education about China and the Chinese has gained the Australian Government's attention. By 2010, among 39 universities in Australia, 29 offered units or courses in Chinese language and 21 offered a unit or course in Chinese culture or society (S. Li, 2010). However, in 2008, the number of Chinese language students in Australian schools accounted for only 28 per cent of the number of students learning Japanese or Italian. At Year 12 nationally, only a scant 0.3 per cent of non-Chinese-background students take Chinese language. The small number of students learning Chinese language in Australian schools epitomises the dire situation of the dearth of white Australians who understand China and who can speak Chinese. This needs the Government's urgent attention.

Likewise, cultural exchange can help tackle its social and cultural roots. Cultural exchange can bring about changes in attitudes between peoples and their states. "It is indeed one of the common fallacies of the age to believe that international understanding is brought about automatically, as a result of the play of impersonal forces" (Zimmern, 1929, p. 55). Efforts in cultural exchange could be made in the forms of education, tourism, literature, arts, and diplomacy. These would exert an imperceptible influence on the other country, and may help win people's hearts and minds. Student exchange through studying overseas offer the best platform for cultural understanding. Tourists are also commonly seen as potential ambassadors for culture. Their apparently casual encounters with locals help enhance mutual cultural understanding, which in the local mind is a mere concept or idea. The importance of literature too, in creating a positive image of a country and its people must also not be underestimated. In fact, cultural exchange between the Chinese and Australian peoples has been growing steadily in the last few decades, and culminated between 2010 and 2012, when the Reciprocal Years of Culture between Australia and the People's Republic of China took place for the first time to become the largest ever international cultural promotion. It marked an unprecedented level of cultural exchange between the two

countries in art, literature, exhibitions, concert tours and among everyday tourists, and in particular in the educational exchange of students and scholars.

The sustained economic development and political reform of China may play an important part in tackling the economic and political roots of White Australia's superiority. Although China's economic and political situation are not the focus of this article, their roles should not be underestimated in developing mutual respect. Chinese people catching up with Australians in terms of living standards, and human rights can help diminish this mentality. Zimmern warns that "good knowledge of different cultures may not necessarily lead to warmer feelings of friendship and respect" (1929, p. 55). This may indicate that the economic and political powers of a country and its people plays a very important role in gaining respect or eradicating superiority of other countries and peoples. Perhaps it is superiority in human nature that is reflected in social dimensions. Although China has risen to become the second largest world economy, due to its large population and poor social welfare systems, the average Chinese living conditions remain far lower than those of Australians. China is also not a democratic society and the Chinese are not able to enjoy universal human rights, such as the right to vote, freedom of speech, and transparent legislative and just judiciary systems. In summary, China's sustained economic development and political reform may help the Chinese enjoy similar living standards and human rights as Australians, which may play an important role in developing good manners, establishing mutual respect and diminishing White Australia's superiority.

6. Conclusion

Although China has risen to become the second largest world economy, with a vital role in the biggest economic boom in Australia since the 1850s gold rush (Smyth, 2014, p. 38), White Australia's superiority over Chinese lingers. This article first presented the empirical evidence of racial superiority and racial discrimination against Chinese in Australia. Then, a theoretical framework of constructivism and an anthropological view of culture was established to explore its social and cultural roots. And with the theoretical support, the social and cultural background of Australian racial discrimination against Chinese was examined through the prism of history. Following that, the article looked at the social and cultural elements of contemporary China that may further nurture White Australia's superiority, such as the moral crisis within China, idolisation of Westerners, and worshiping Western goods. Finally, factors to diminish White Australia's superiority were discussed in terms of education, cultural exchange, and China's development. In conclusion, it can be said that the road to Australian respect for the Chinese will not be a short one.

Note

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Book Reviews

Book Review

Jeroen de Kloet and Lena Scheen (eds), *Spectacle and the City: Chinese Urbanities in Art and Popular Culture*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013, 278 pp.

Nowadays Chinese cities are characterised by fast and regular changes, which affect not only the urban landscape, but also people's experience of the city. Amsterdam University Press published in the series *Cities and Cultures* a vibrant collection of works, which come from a workshop at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). Entitled *Spectacle and the City: Chinese Urbanities in Art and Popular Culture*, this collection offers an interdisciplinary look at this particular phenomenon from the perspective of art and popular culture. The fascinating assumption surrounding the book is the connection between the experience of the cities and the imagination about the cities (p. 12). Thus the book addresses how imaginations affect people's experience of Chinese urbanities, by delving into the ways in which art and popular culture depict recent urban changes. The heterogeneous group of authors provides the reader with the possibility of exploring the theme from different angles. It is interesting to note that the collection does not limit its focus on Mainland China, but rather it also includes cities like Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taipei.

The idea of city-as-spectacle is presented in the title as a key element encompassing the contributions. However, the definition of spectacle rooted in Guy Debord's account does not play the same fundamental role in all chapters. In the introduction the editors, Jeroen de Kloet and Lena Sheen, try to elucidate and unify the theoretical underpinnings of the contributions (pp. 13-15). Debord's connection between art and everyday life is supplemented by Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory from which the book retrieves the idea that non-human actors, such as images, hold their own agency. The concept of "haptic machine," which stems from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, is also mentioned to frame the city as a particular machine (p. 15). In addition, the introduction traces a more intriguing clarification about the interdisciplinary outlook of the book. By addressing the "production of place", the ambitious goal of the collection is to "align" urban studies and cultural studies with area studies (pp. 15-16). The specific reason for this stimulating alignment is to move beyond a rigid definition of urbanisation rooted in the

claim for universalism and modernity. Hence the cities are interpreted "as manifestations of alternative, or partially overlapping, modernities" related to both local and global pressures (p. 16).

The thirteen chapters of the collection compose a dynamic path of exploration among different representations of Chinese urbanities. The first chapter focuses on speed and space. The author, Ackbar Addas, stresses the fact that media like architecture and cinema "perform" space, rather than represent it, by shaping a "spatial history" (p. 22). The Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony directed by Zhang Yimou and the film *Still Life* by Jia Zhangke are taken into account as two clarifying examples of distinct ways of performing spaces. In the second chapter, Chua Beng Huat critically examines a specific effect of the Singaporean process of aestheticisation in art: the condition of sex workers is covered by the way in which some artists frame the red light district of Singapore, since they depict it as a critique of the lifestyle of the middle class. The author of the following chapter, Robin Visser, considers two different artworks, a novel by Yu Hua (*Brothers*) and a virtual artwork by Cao Fei (*RMB City*). This contribution, by delving into Debord's notion of spectacle with reference to the city, uncovers the fact that resistances can take place only if the spectacle does not completely control social spaces (pp. 57-58). In the fourth chapter, Yomi Braester explores art and cinema in China that are against the "neoliberal apotheosis of the consumerist city", which is shaped by architectural scale models and their "urbanistic utopia" (p. 67). The strategy adopted by the artists has an "antitopian" perspective challenging the "mimetic relationship" between the model and the city (p. 73). Jeroen de Kloet, in the subsequent chapter, focuses on creative industries and their Chinese policies. Even though the art zone 798 should represent a place for free creative experiments, it is an example of space where "global capital, the art world and the nation-state are conflated" (p. 78). Hence the author addresses *RMB City* as a different space that "forges new possibilities of thinking and living the urban" (p. 92).

In the sixth chapter, Jeroen Groenewegen-Lau retrieves the concepts of *derive* and *détournement* from Debord and the Situationism in order to consider some sound artworks. Hence he uncovers their contradictions and questions their possibility of shaping an anti-spectacular critique. Chinese propaganda posters in the last 60 years are the theme of the seventh chapter. The author, Stefan Landsberger, undertakes a visual research about the images of the city and the countryside with a focus on the urbanisation and the policies elaborated to foster its development. In the eighth chapter, Gladys Pak Lei Chong examines how a new image of Beijing has been shaped in the 2008 Olympic Games. The politics of reappearance and disappearance affect the past and the future, since "the 'old' Beijing is being remade and then represented in the package of New Beijing" (p. 136).

The city of Shanghai in literature and cinema is scrutinised by Gregory Bracken in the subsequent chapter. The contribution highlights the fact that the spectacle of global consumption drives the way in which the built environment is preserved and reshaped. In the tenth chapter, Margaret Hillenbrand addresses fast urban changes in relation to their memories: the idea of "past as home" implies a preservation of the "really remembered city" (p. 179). In the following chapter, Lena Scheen takes into account *Shanghai Baby* by Wei Hui and *Sandbed* by Ge Hongbing. The author explores these two Shanghai novels in order to clarify how the protagonists experience urban changes as linked with gender and social constrains. Urbanisation and opposition movements are the topic of the twelfth chapter. Here the author, Ou Ning, frames the city as "a vivid form of life with diversified cultures and pluralistic spiritual needs" (p. 219). In the last chapter, John Nguyet Erni delves into the "harbourcide" in order to provide "an alternative reading of Hong Kong's environmental decay" (p. 227). In doing so, the contribution faces the issue of "a cultural crisis of the senses" by linking cultural studies with environmental law (p. 228).

The book takes Debord's definition of spectacle as a lens for the analysis. However, the contributions develop its potentiality in different directions. The power to subvert the spectacle, for example, is interestingly questioned in the third and in the sixth chapters where the authors address, respectively, the conditions for spaces of resistance and of anti-spectacular critiques. Some complementary issues are presented across several chapters. In particular, some authors provide an intriguing exploration of the topic of nostalgia in order to shed light on the relationship between people and the past in a thought-provoking way. For example, the first chapter clarifies that nostalgia does not involve only the generation of the elderly, the fifth chapter considers nostalgia as a part of specific productions subsuming within global capitalism, the ninth chapter uncovers preservation and reconstruction as currently driven by global consumption, and the subsequent chapter attempts to point out cultural productions that could have the power to keep memories alive.

All in all, I think that the reader can benefit from the significant level of heterogeneity of the book, as it contextualises the theme of the city-as-spectacle in different places and with respect to several forms of art and popular culture. However, a weakness of the collection is probably that the thirteen chapters are not arranged into thematic parts, which would have improved the organisation of the contents and driven future debates more efficacy. Considering the far-reaching interdisciplinary objective of the book, namely the reframing of both urban studies and cultural studies with area studies, I think it succeeds well enough in this attempt. As a result, the authors avoid comparing the contexts that they examine with a concept of modernisation that is supposed to be a universal process and point of

reference. Hence, the book offers a thoughtful overview of the representations of Chinese urbanities, by pinpointing their diverse features.

In conclusion, the collection successfully exemplifies a promising field of application for Debord's concept of spectacle. By placing the idea of city-as-spectacle in Chinese contexts and representations, it problematises urban changes in a dynamic and vibrant way. In doing so, the book warns the reader that, as it is also remarked in the introduction, the power of art and popular culture can be adopted "to inspire change" or "to support the ideological status quo" (p. 19). Even though a different organisation of the book would have simplified the reading, I am confident that the contributions have the potential to provide scholars with valuable insights to continue developing the debate as well as to contextualise the topic in other regions.

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Book Review

Frauke Austermann, Anastas Vangeli, and Xiaoguang Wang (eds), *China and Europe in 21st Century Global Politics: Partnership, Competition or Co-evolution*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, 218 pp. + xii.

Europe-China relations is a time-attested topic. One of the early works on this topic is *China and Europe: Intellectual and Artistic Contacts in the Eighteenth Century* (Adolf Reichwein, translated by J.C. Powell, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), which was the first one to attempt a general survey of European relations to China. Later, there were dozens of books on similar topics, such as *Europe and China: A Survey of Their Relations from the Earliest Times to 1800* (G.F. Hudson, London: Arnold, 1931), *The International Politics of EU-China Relations* (David Kerr, Liu Fei (eds), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and *Europe and China: Strategic Partners or Rivals?* (Roland Vogt, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012). It is worth noting that the arguments and conclusions of these works always fall within the partnership-and-competition spectrum.

Different from these works, *China and Europe in 21st Century Global Politics* goes beyond the dichotomy between partner and rival. From both European and Chinese perspectives, this collection of essays introduces the insightful narrative of co-evolution into the studies of Europe-China relations, updates the dynamics of the most significant facets, and examines the characteristics and setbacks of the co-evolutionary Europe-China relations in the early 21st century. Moreover, both editors and contributors to this collection are emerging scholars, their insights will be helpful to shape the narrative shift of Europe-China relations in the future.

This collection has an introduction, a conclusion and eight chapters. In the introduction, Frauke Austermann and Wang Xiaoguang outline the chapters and highlight that the dichotomy between partner and rival has not been suitable to explain the dynamics of Europe-China relations. As they suggest, co-evolution might be more appropriate to identify Europe-China relations in the early 21st century, which is a historic transition from strategic competition to partnership. In the words of Henry Kissinger, the advocator of "co-evolution", co-evolution means that both parties identify and develop interests where possible, reserve differences in their domestic imperatives, and adjust their relations to minimise conflict. The following

pages (Chapters 1-8) examine the possibility of co-evolution in the dynamics of Europe-China relations in the most significant fields, including security relations (by Anastas Vangeli and He Yin), energy and environmental issues (Maximilian Rech and Li Xinlei), sovereign debt crisis (by Wang Liang, Shi Wentao and Antonia Hmaidi), soft power and public diplomacy (by Julia Soeffner, Wang Haiping and He Zhigao). In the conclusion, Anastas Vangeli and Frauke Austermann summarise the findings of this collection, and stress that the narrative of co-evolution is more applicable to illustrate the current Europe-China relations.

This collection at least makes two contributions to the existing literature of the Europe-China relations. First, it clearly identifies the term of co-evolution in the context of Europe-China relations. Co-evolution refers to a two-layers learning process, that is, mutual perception and self-perception. On the level of mutual perception, both sides could be "Learning from each other" (p. 203). In many cases, they "reciprocally affect each other's evolution and development" (p. 183). The most significant case should be the mutual partnership between China and Europe in energy and environmental governance (e.g. renewable energy policy). In addition, it is estimated that the existing initiatives participated by both sides (e.g. multilateral and international organisations, and the Europe-China Human Rights Dialogue) could gain more momentum in Europe-China relations. On the level of self-perception, the similarities in self-perception could play an essential role in promoting Europe-China co-evolution. Particularly, they are both advocates of multilateralism and global peace.

Second, this collection reveals the critical challenges facing current Europe-China relations, especially normative divergence and mutual distrust. As the editors and contributors argue, both Europe and China "often struggle with projecting their desired images to one another" (p. 205), while there are still significant divergences in values and norms (e.g. sovereignty and human rights). In addition, the misunderstanding between both sides are "more likely when normatively charged foreign policy actions of the one side directly challenge the policy of the other" (p. 25).

The other critical challenge is lack of mutual trust on both sides. In the case of Euro zone crisis, Europe hoped for more financial and monetary commitments from China, while Europe refused to grant China Market Economy Status. This made China's domestic interests and international commitments conflicted with each other. As a result, Europe did not receive the expected rescue from China, though the idea that "rescuing Europe is rescuing China" seemed to "have prevailed among elites" in China (p. 80).

Concerning the proper solutions, as this collection addresses, both sides should strengthen public diplomacy instruments, particularly people-to-people cultural exchanges and study exchange programmes between China

and Europe, while searching for "overlapping win-sets of their respective domestic arenas" (p. 125).

If there is an omission in this thought-provoking collection of essays, I think it is that the editors and contributors express less concern about three important variables in Europe-China Relations. The first variable is the voting rule of the European Union, which includes qualified majority, simple majority and absolute majority. The rule of qualified majority applies to the adoption of proposals on the following matters concerning employment and industrial relations; Simple majority is usually applicable to the European Parliament; in contrast, the EU Commission often decides by an absolute majority of its commissioners. It is critically needed to examine the extent to which the three voting rules would produce impacts on the co-evolutionary Europe-China relations in different scenarios.

The second variable is veto privileges enjoyed by each EU member country in treaty negotiations that requires the unanimous consent of all EU member countries. In other words, any EU member county could wield its veto power to stop any treaty negotiation related with Europe-China relations. Moreover, EU member countries' national interests "compete with each other and may also be incongruent" with the EU's interests (p. 176). On this account, the transaction cost of satisfying all EU member countries will be much higher than what China could afford.

In such case, it is not surprising to see that China gave "priority to a bilateral rather than a regional approach" (p. 84), because China might keep close relations with some EU member countries. Though this kind of solution would lose many opportunities for rallying supports from all EU member countries, it could effectively prevent some EU members from advocating exclusive or discriminal treaty through the veto power of certain EU member country. In the coming future, it will be more likely for China to establish co-evolutionary relations with some pro-China EU members, rather than Europe as a whole.

The third variable is impacts posted by the United States, which is the most essential strategic partner of Europe. The editors and contributors show little concern to the United States' attitude on whither Europe-China relations in the early 21st century. Would co-evolution of Europe-China relations accord with the national interests of the Untied States? The answer to this question might be time-consuming. If this collection could take the three variables mentioned above into account, its arguments and conclusions will be more inclusive.

Overall, *China and Europe in 21st Century Global Politics* has success-fully opened an avenue for future research. It emphasises the dynamics and setbacks of the co-evolutionary Europe-China relations in the early 21st century, and offers readers a balanced perspective between European

and Chinese scholars. This collection will have value for all readers who are interested in co-evolution of international relations. Scholars, students and policy analysts of Europe-China relations will appreciate the editors and contributors' efforts in narrative shift in the literature of Europe-China relations. In addition, it will be a welcome addition to the collection of academic libraries.

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