

# **The Making of the Modern Chinese State and China's Quest for Modernity**

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## **Introduction**

The modern state system emerged in the Peace of Westphalia, which marked the conclusion of the brutal Thirty Years' War (1618-48) in Europe. Central to this new type of world order known as the Westphalian system are the principles of state sovereignty and equality (Kissinger 2014).

While the concept of the state is subject to definitions from different perspectives, Max Weber offers us the most popular definition of the state as a political organization, 'The modern state is a compulsory association which organizes domination. It has been successful in seeking to monopolize the legitimate use of physical force as a means of domination within a territory' (Weber [Gerth and Mills] 1947).

As one goes beyond Weber and looks at the making and operations of the modern state, however, the task becomes far messier (Silberman 1993; Tilly 1992; Abrams 1988). In a recent attempt at a synthesis, Bob Jessop (2016) proposed that 'just as there can be no general theory of the state, there can be no general theory of its decline, crisis, or failure.' To gain traction on studying actually existing state systems, Jessop (2016) offers a four-element definition of the state, although he immediately lists six qualifications after this definition:

The core of the state apparatus comprises a relatively unified ensemble of socially embedded, socially regularized, and strategically selective institutions and organizations [Staatsgewalt] whose socially accepted function is to define and enforce collectively binding decisions on the

members of a society [Staatsvolk] in a given territorial area [Staatsgebiet] in the name of the common interest or general will of an imagined political community identified with that territory [Staatsidee]. (Jessop 2016, p.49).

Weber's classic definition of the state, with its focus on domination through the legitimate use of physical violence, reflected well on the violent origins of European state-making (Tilly 1992). In contrast, Jessop's definition a century later takes a strategic-relational approach to state power and pays more attention to claims of common interest or general will. While neither definition is perfect for the job of describing and analyzing the origins and evolution of the modern Chinese state, between them they offer valuable vantage points for our endeavor.

As one of humanity's most enduring civilizations, China had well-established patterns and culture of autocratic rule when it had to confront with modern western states in earnest during the Qing Dynasty under Manchu rule. During this extended and humiliating confrontation, the old order collapsed with the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 but this has been followed by more decades of struggles, mostly among Chinese, through which the Chinese state has been reconstituted. Today the Chinese state, led by the Communist Party of China, boasts the world's largest population and second largest economy. A study of the modern Chinese state is by necessity a review of the remaking of the Chinese state, still in progress today.

### 1. Late Imperial China and the Challenges of Modernity

Despite much basic agreement on the contours of Chinese history following the Qin unification in 221 BC, there exists interesting and important disagreement over what 'China' means or what 'Chinese civilization' is about (Ge 2011). It is useful to note that Chinese dynasties aspired to the *tianxia* or 'all-under-heaven' model and considered China as the center of the universe. In the Qin, Han, and Tang dynasties, the rulers of China achieved political, military and cultural dominance but nonetheless the borders of the empire were not clearly fixed, as befitting the theory of *tianxia* or 'all-under-heaven' (Xu 2010). Among other things, the lack of a clear boundary is one element that clearly

distinguished the earlier Chinese empires from the modern state. Thus, in his popular *On China*, the eminent historian Xu Zhuoyun (Cho-yun Hsu) concludes that China has been ‘an ever-changing and complex community’ (Xu 2015).

With the Song Dynasty (interrupted by the Yuan, which was part of the Mongol empire), clear boundaries became the norm and out of necessity because the Song had to coexist with the Liao and the Jin. The most famous of such boundaries is what is today known as the Great Wall, most of what exists today was built during the Ming Dynasty (Waldron 1990). A Han Chinese identity also began to emerge in the Song and became further enhanced by the brutality of Mongol rule. In seeking to overturn Mongol rule, Zhu Yuanzhang, the founding emperor of the Ming, marched to the north with the charge that the Mongols had misruled. Xu (2015) argues that by distinguishing between Mongol and Han Chinese rule, Zhu essentially ‘proclaimed the end of the Tianxia system in Chinese history and affirmed the Han’s ethnic affinity for the Huaxia culture.’

Historians generally consider the later Ming and Qing as belonging to the late imperial or early modern period (Rowe 2009). Our consideration of the modern Chinese state thus begins with this period. Interestingly, the Thirty Year’s War in Europe coincided with the last decades of the Ming Dynasty. Both were affected by what is today known as the Little Ice Age. The historian Timothy Brook (2010) writes, ‘No emperor of the Yuan or Ming faced climatic conditions as abnormal and severe as Chongzhen (the last emperor of the Ming, r. 1627-44) had the misfortune of doing.’ By the 1630s, the Ming, buffeted by persistent severe weather, suffered from repeated famines and epidemics. To keep the machinery of state running, the Ming levied heavier and heavier taxes, causing resentment among its subjects and providing fertile ground for rebels such as Li Zicheng, who was able to storm in Beijing and pronounce the founding of the Shun Dynasty. Emperor Chongzhen hanged himself but the Shun Dynasty quickly fell to the Manchus, a hereditary professional caste which had only been assembled during Ming times but was far more ready to rule than Li Zicheng. The Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was born.

It is now well established that the Qing Empire was a multinational polity that practiced Confucian rule primarily in the former territory of the Ming, where the Qing ruler was the Chinese emperor. Elsewhere, however, he was also the khan of khans, and Buddha reincarnate (Rawski 1998). The Qing Empire achieved its zenith in the eighteenth century, particularly during the 60-year reign of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735-96). As its territory and population expanded steadily and vastly, the Qing economy was indisputably the largest in the world and in fact was still the largest when the Qing was humiliated by the British in the First Opium War (1839-42) and had to sign the first of many “unequal” treaties (Maddison 2006).

A stylized outline of Confucian governance would go as follows. The emperor, endowed with the mythical ‘mandate of heaven’, exercised absolute rule that should also aim to be benevolent in accordance with Confucian teachings and ritual (Faure 2007). The emperor governed with the support of a meritocratic elite of Confucian scholar-officials selected through a rigorous system of civil service examinations that was open to (male) talent from throughout the empire. This elite was in turn rooted in the landed class. As a result, the Confucian civil service examination system not only became the major conduit for the governing elite but also served to integrate the empire politically, economically and culturally, though Confucian orthodoxy dominated at the expense of the spirit of innovation (Elman 2000 and 1991; Lin 1995).

Whereas in the Confucian world the political attained primacy over other spheres of life, the scholars-officials, with their moral training, would in the ideal world of Confucian rule counterbalance the emperor’s despotism. In practice, the authority of the emperor had already become dominant by the Eastern Han dynasty. While few would dispute the historical importance of Confucianism, modern-day scholars including Kung-chuan Hsiao (1976) and Ying-shih Yu (2014) have underscored the importance of ‘legalism’ in imperial Chinese governance (Zhao 2015). Confucian ideals were often honored in their breach and all too often the practice of ‘revering the emperor and belittling the ministers (君尊臣卑)’ prevailed. The character of dynastic rule in late imperial China, dominated by alien rule by the Mongols and the Manchus (and the Ming

inherited much of the brutality of Mongol rule), was especially autocratic, tempered as it was by the veneer of Confucian rule.

From today's perspective, the early modern dynastic states of China were modest in size and, in the words of William Rowe (2010), it was governance on the cheap, with significant continuities as well as adaptations in the organizations of imperial governments. In the 'expansionist, multinational, early modern empire' that was the Qing (Rowe 2010), the Manchu emperor governed with the assistance of the Grand Secretariat (Grand Secretaries) along with Six Boards (Revenue, Civil Office, Criminal Justice, Public Works, Rites, and War). There was also a Censorate, a system of surveillance over all governmental operations that had become especially prominent in the Ming (Hucker 1966). Outside of the Capital, the emperor appointed local officials, including governors-general and governors of provinces, prefects of prefectures, county magistrates, plus various functional specialists that reported to respective Boards.

As a conquest dynasty, it is no surprise that the Manchu emperor directly controlled the military, comprised of the Bannermen and the Chinese Green Standard Army. He also further enhanced control over the communications system that had served successive dynasties, receiving information from throughout the empire and frequently issuing edicts to appointed officials and generals at the front (Wu 1969). Much thought went into the adoption of mechanisms to enhance central control and get the appointees to govern with the empire's interest in mind. In addition to the Censorate and other forms of supervision and surveillance, the well-known avoidance rule prohibiting the appointment of an official to his home province and areas in close proximity to his home province was strictly followed. Officials also were regularly moved around rather than being allowed to sink roots. There were also various other forms of checks and balances, such as that between the governor-general and the governor.

Compelled by the need to govern an expanding territory, the Qing further substantiated and elaborated a system of provincial appointments and administrations--a development that helped to sustain the Qing for nearly 270 years (Guy 2010). Within the provinces were prefectures and counties and it is conventional wisdom that the county

magistrates, as outsiders, often lacked the resources to dominate the locales. Instead, while collecting revenue and administering justice, the (roving) county magistrates must make accommodations with the local communities (the local gentry, guilds, and lineages) that took the lead on education and ritual (Chang 1955). This was largely true and austere autocratic rule was thus tempered by Confucian teachings, ritual, as well as local society. Yet recent research also suggests that the emperor's reach went below the county not simply with the imposition of the *baojia* system but there were in fact various forms of sub-county control mechanism adopted around the country (Hu 2015).

In a multi-national empire dominated by the Manchus, ethnic relations was of paramount importance. While the Manchu emperors integrated the civil service system into the imperial system and espoused a fiction of multinational unity “all under heaven”, they were also worried and vigilant about Han dominance (Yao 2015). To ensure the predominance of the Manchus, each of the Boards was headed by two presidents, one Manchu, one Han. And the Qing emperors also set up several other institutions outside of the civil service system, especially the Grand Council (军机处 or Office of Military Planning), that effectively concentrated information and decision-making power in their own hands. When the Kangxi emperor was traveling outside of Beijing, he mostly relied on his non-Han advisers (Yao 2015). It was a system that Edward Rhoads aptly termed “separate but unequal (Rhoads 2000).”

As a product of Manchu imperialism, the Qing Empire was extraordinarily successful for its times, with expanding territory, burgeoning population, and growing commercial prosperity. European Enlightenment thinkers initially lavished praise on Chinese-style despotism. Voltaire stated: the Chinese empire was ‘the oldest of the entire world, the best governed doubtless because it was the longest lasting.’ (Padgen 2013) The German polymath and philosopher Leibniz showed so much admiration for the Chinese art of government in 1697 that he thought it ‘necessary that Chinese missionaries should be sent us to teach the aim and practice of natural theology.’ (Grieder 1983)

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the Qing Empire more than met its match in western imperialism and the Manchu reign of prosperity and stability began to crack

under international and domestic pressures. In foreign policy, the Qing, like its predecessor dynasties, relished the trappings of a tributary system and treated neighboring and foreign ruling regimes as vassal states and barbarians (Fairbank and Teng 1941). Steeped in the air of superiority, the Qing emperors and elites found it hard to treat as equals those foreigners coming from across the oceans, as Lord Macartney famously found out earlier during his mission to Emperor Qianlong in 1793-94 (Macartney 1963). Politically, diplomatically, culturally and psychologically the rulers of the Qing emperor empire, like their peers in other empires, simply not prepared for a world of modern sovereign states of equality.

Yet the Treaty of Westphalia, which brought the major European powers sovereign equality and mutual respect, also helped free them to pursue overseas ventures. By the mid-nineteenth century European powers, reaping the fruits of the Industrial Revolution, had become formidable on the global stage. Meanwhile, unlike earlier during the Enlightenment, European thinkers had by then acquired civilizational self-confidence. Whereas liberal thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville championed liberty and equality at home, they also supported colonial conquest in backward or savage areas (Mehta 1999; Pitts 2009). Little of the earlier European admiration for China's 'oriental despotism' remained (Pagden 2013).

In this context, the extraordinarily arduous remaking of the Chinese state from empire to modern state began in earnest with the Opium Wars (1839-42; 1856-60) and the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64) and was partly the product of a monumental clash of empires from East and West that, one may argue, lingers to this day.

The historian Timothy Brook (2010), one of the world's foremost scholars on the Ming, notes that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ming China had become increasingly tied to a maritime world-economy centered on the South China Sea, which pivoted the Ming economy offshore to connect with global supply and demand through trade with South Asia, Europe, and South America. The Qing halted this process by tightly controlling the borders and confining trade to Canton. As a consequence of the Opium Wars and others that followed, however, the Qing empire was forced to open up.

Karl Marx, worshipped in today's China as the guiding spirit of the Chinese Communist Party, wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and was a foreign correspondent for the *New York Tribune* for more than a decade beginning in 1852. While lamenting the consumption of opium as being 'at the expense of human life and morality' and the Opium War as 'unfortunate,' Marx, in a dispatch dated June 14, 1853, saw the First Opium War's potential in bringing change to China, which he thought was in a state of 'hereditary stupidity'. Thus Marx celebrated the Opium War's effect on the Manchu Qing Dynasty:

Before the British arms the authority of the Manchu dynasty fell to pieces; the superstitious faith in the eternity of the Celestial Empire broke down; the barbarous and hermetic isolation from the civilized world was infringed; and an opening was made for that intercourse which has since proceeded so rapidly under the golden attractions of California and Australia. (Marx, Ledbetter and Wheen 2007, p.3)

Marx wasn't very accurate in predicting European revolutions but his quixotic prognosis on the Qing was prescient, if not for the right reason, 'That isolation having come to a violent end by the medium of England, dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air.' (Marx, Ledbetter and Wheen 2007)

The Qing didn't simply dissolve. Unable to rely on its centrally controlled but weak regular armies to quell the Taiping Rebellion (and also the Nian and Moslem Rebellions), the Qing came to lean on forces organized by the local gentry, particularly the Hunanese army that owed its loyalty to Zeng Guofan. It was also willing to use foreign forces to join in the suppression of domestic rebellion, something that would be unimaginable in today's China. It was clear the soldiers were not fighting for the honor of the nation-state. After quelling the Taiping Rebellion, the exhausted Qing managed substantial restoration and self-strengthening, including significant developments in military industries.

By the early 1890s, the Qing Beiyang Fleet looked as formidable as the naval fleet of Japan, which had since the Meiji Restoration of 1868 undergone rapid transformation into a modern industrial state with powerful military forces. Yet in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 (甲午战争 in Chinese), the Qing was soundly defeated and the Beiyang fleet was annihilated. As a result, the Qing had to cede Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula as well as to pay a huge indemnity to the Empire of Japan, and to give up suzerainty over Korea. The ramifications of these losses continue to reverberate to this day.

The utter defeat by the neighboring and far smaller Japan underscored the failure of the Qing Dynasty's half-hearted efforts to modernize and sounded the death knell of the Qing tributary system. Immediately afterward, Yuan Shikai was tasked to build a (Beiyang) New Army and he did so by learning from the German Empire. The defeat also became a catalyst for the bold reforms of 1898 that Emperor Guangxu sought to promote on the principle that "in a true sense, there is no difference between China and the West in setting up government for the sake of the people (Hsü 2000)." These reforms were soon halted by the Empress Dowager Cixi, who put the emperor under house arrest. Several years later, following the Boxer debacle, the chastened Empress Dowager herself began to champion a broad range of significant reforms in commerce, education, police, and industry under the rubric of New Policies. A 1902 edict lifted the ban on Manchu-Han marriages. The Civil Service Examinations were finally abolished in 1905. Many of the reforms occurred under the leadership of Yuan Shikai, who was promoted to Viceroy of Zhili and Commissioner for North China Trade.

Public demands for constitutional reforms to emulate Japan escalated following Japan's dramatic victory over Russia in 1905. Sensing danger, the Empress Dowager came to see constitutional reforms as a bulwark against overthrow by anti-Manchu revolutionaries such as Sun Yat-sen and eventually approved an outline plan for constitutional reforms in August 1908. This reform plan mandated a preparatory period of nine years but both Cixi and, mysteriously, Emperor Guangxu died in November 1908. Prince Chun (Zaifeng), regent to Puyi (Emperor Xuantong), sought to accelerate

the constitutional reforms but, in spite of popular demands for a “responsible cabinet”, the new cabinet Prince Chun introduced in May 1911 was clearly designed to keep power in the hands of Manchu princes. Such obtuseness only added fuel to a politically volatile environment. By October 1911, the Wuchang Uprising took place. Within weeks, seventeen out of twenty-two provinces declared their independence from the court. The Qing could no longer hold and, following careful maneuvers, the peaceful abdication of Emperor Xuantong occurred in Spring 1912 to make way for a new republic.

### **The Republic of Frustrations: The Rise and Fall of the Republic of China on the Mainland**

One summer evening in 1867, Zhao Liewen (赵烈文), long-term confidante to Zeng Guofan (then leading the successful suppression of the Taiping Rebellion), joined Zeng in worrying about the fate of the Qing Dynasty. Zhao predicted when the end came it would be because ‘the empire will be bereft of leadership; all will have to fend for themselves within 50 years.’ (Zhao 2013) The abdication of Emperor Xuantong happened about 45 years after the Zeng-Zhao conversation.

Yet a leader did exist during the transition and that was Yuan Shikai, who enjoyed the support of a formidable military and bureaucratic coalition. Asked by the court to form a new cabinet in November 1911, Yuan was not eager to help prolong the Qing Dynasty and played a pivotal role in helping arrange for the emperor’s peaceful abdication. Meanwhile, the revolutionaries who advocated for the overthrow of Manchu rule chose Sun Yatsen as provisional president of the new Republic of China but Sun and the rest of the nation thought that only Yuan possessed the resources and gravitas to fill the leadership void (非袁莫属) (Ma 2016). Sun accordingly invited Yuan to take his place as the President and Yuan accepted in March 1912. Nonetheless, Sun and his colleagues sought to constrain the president’s power with a provisional Constitution that drew on the American Constitution in spirit.

For a while the Chinese Revolution of 1911 looked like a Chinese version of the Glorious Revolution. However, following the 1903 assassination of Song Jiaoren, a rising star of the recently formed Nationalist Party (KMT), Sun Yatsen called for a second revolution, this time against Yuan Shikai. Yuan responded with a massive crackdown on Sun and his followers. In a time of national weaknesses, Yuan made persistent efforts to acquire more power and resources. Advised by the Columbia University Professor Frank Goodnow, who didn't believe the Chinese were mature enough for democracy, Yuan eventually sought to become the Hongxian emperor in 1915 amid a perilous international environment (Japan sought to impose the notorious Twenty-one Demands on China) (Kroncke 2012). Yuan's imperial ambitions were greeted by national condemnation, however. As in 1911, province after province declared their independence. Deeply humiliated, Yuan died in June 1916 at the age of 58 and left a gigantic power vacuum behind. The military and bureaucratic coalition centered on him splintered. This time Zhao Liewen's prediction came true. Even though a nominal and impotent central government continued to exist in Beijing, China fell into provincial militarism and warlordism for more than a decade, with battles and wars galore, though this was also an era of intellectual experimentation and political diversity (Chi 1976; McCord 1993; Sheridan 1975; Furth 1976; Fung 2010 ). It was China's decade of state failure.

The Nationalist Party (KMT) regrouped in Canton and set up a provisional military government in 1918. Sun Yatsen was made Grand Marshal, though power in Guangdong was held by Chen Jiongming, who would break with Sun in 1922 but is also known for his federalist vision (Chen 1999). With Soviet support, the Chinese Communist Party got its start in 1921 and soon joined in a United Front with the KMT, which also received Soviet assistance (Pantsov and Levine 2013). Sun also sought to reorganize the KMT along Leninist lines in 1924 but couldn't complete it (Yu 1966).

Following Sun's death in March 1925, Chiang Kai-shek emerged as one of the KMT's most influential leaders and led the revolutionary army on the highly successful Northern Expedition to pacify the warlord armies and reunify the country. At the end of

1928, Generalissimo Chiang became head of the national government as well as of the KMT and commander in chief of the armed forces. Major warlords pledged their allegiance to the central government, at least nominally, though the central government had direct control over a small number of provinces only.

A left-leaning Confucian as well as converted Christian, Chiang couldn't rely on established institutions but worked hard to appeal to a broad political spectrum amid contending political forces (Taylor 2009). Ideologically, Chiang espoused Sun Yat-sen's three principles of the people (Democracy, Nationalism, and People's Livelihood). Ethnically, Chiang and the KMT chose to emphasize that the Republic of China was a unitary nation-state comprised of one Chinese nation (中华民族), predominantly Han in origin but having assimilated others such as the Manchu. Such a doctrine appeared to be inclusive and yet satisfied the notion of Chinese culture being superior and therefore even conquerors of the Han had been assimilated; it also justified continuing efforts at assimilation (Fiskesjö 2006; Rhoads, Manchus and Han 2000; Zhao 2004).

Not surprisingly, Chiang persevered in efforts to build a effective national state. Most of such efforts focused on the economy. On the recommendation of Sir Arthur Salter of the League of Nations, the Nationalist Government set up the National Economic Council (NEC) in 1931 and pursued major financial and currency reforms (Young 1971). Taxes on farmers were cut. And in spite of the Great Depression and Japanese depredations, Republican China in its first decade achieved decent economic growth, with notable development in industries ranging from textiles, heavy industry, to transportation and finance (Rawski 1989; Sih 1970; Eastman 1986). This first decade was considered the golden age of the Chinese bourgeoisie (Bergère 1989; Taylor 2009).

In government administration, the KMT regime made little progress toward the building of a modern administrative system (Tien 1972). Official ideology called for social mobilization in the localities in preparation for self-rule. In practice, local KMT party branches focused their energy on punishing "local bullies and evil gentry" at first and over time strangled local autonomy, thereby undermining the KMT's revolutionary commitment and eroding central state authority (Thornton 2007). Seen from the village

level, a process of state involution took place, undermining the legitimacy of both local elites and the state (Duara 1988).

Consolidation of civilian and military leadership occupied much of Chiang's attention. Chiang had to confront wayward warlords repeatedly and fought significant wars against anti-Chiang coalitions in 1929-30. He also had major challengers from within his own Party, especially Wang Jingwei, until Wang left in 1939 to establish a collaborationist government in Japanese-controlled areas.

As Chiang enlisted German advice to modernize the military (Central Army), his two biggest worries were the CCP and the Japanese. During the Northern Expedition, learning that Stalin had instructed the CCP to replace KMT leaders, Chiang, together with Wang Jingwei and with the support of warlords such as Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan, conducted a brutal purge of CCP members in Shanghai and elsewhere in 1927 (Taylor 2009). As Chiang focused on pacifying the warlords, however, CCP remnants gained breathing room to develop Soviets in mountainous areas between 1927 and 1930. In 1932-34, Chiang's government forces were eventually able to dislodge the Communist forces out of their base areas into an uncertain retreat that would later be glorified as the Long March. The Red Army that included Mao Zedong among its leadership escaped in October 1934 and reached Yan'an more than a year later, a shadow of its former self but now with Mao in charge.

Toward the end of the KMT's first decade in power, Chiang's combination of neo-authoritarianism and neo-traditionalism appeared to be working (Gao 2010: 20-38). China seemed to be finally leaving the post-imperial chaos behind and making headway toward the building of a modern republic. In the words of Jay Taylor (2009), "the power and authority of the Chinese central government was greater than at any time since the Taiping Uprising." Yet any optimism was premature. Effective national control turned out to be far more elusive.

While Chiang wanted to finish off the CCP once and for all, the CCP leadership was able to rally public opinion around the growing Japanese threat and thus harness what Chalmers Johnson calls peasant nationalism (Johnson 1962). Following the Xi'an

Incident (December 1936), when Chiang was kidnapped by the warlord general Zhang Xueliang working in alliance with the CCP leadership, Chiang agreed to another United Front with the CCP against Japanese aggression, a development that Stalin also wanted. Following his release, Chiang could have tried to launch another offensive against the weakly armed CCP forces but chose not to go back on his word.

By mid-1937, China was bearing the brunt of full-scale Japanese invasion. Chiang committed the best Chinese forces--German-trained and armed divisions—to the front against the Japanese killing machine in the hope that they would be able to hold the Japanese invaders off. Nationalist Chinese forces fought bravely but also suffered horrendous losses and were no match for Japanese military might. Eventually Chiang led the government to retreat to Chongqing, the wartime capital. He had to settle for a long game, tying down more than one million Japanese troops in China until allies entered the war and eventually turning the tide (Mitter 2013).

During the Sino-Japanese War, Chiang's national government sent funds each month to the CCP forces, as did Stalin's USSR. While part of the United Front against Japan, the CCP under Mao was careful to preserve and expand its strengths while the Central Army under Chiang fought valiantly and suffered the bulk of the casualties. In a secret report to Stalin written in January 1940, Zhou Enlai reported that as of August 1939 more than one million Chinese soldiers had been killed or wounded in the War against the Japanese. About 3 percent of the casualties, or 30,100, were from the Communist troops (Dallin, Stalin and Dimitrov 2000; Taylor 2009). Chiang appeared to be aware of Mao's chicanery but the central government kept on providing funds to the CCP troops. While he hated the CCP's ideology of class struggle, he nonetheless admired its discipline and was critical of many of his own Party for showing 'selfish concerns' (Taylor 2009).

Chiang's strategic vision paid off after the United States entered the war after Pearl Harbor. With the staggering losses and sacrifices China had sustained for more than a decade, the Republic of China was on the side of the victors and Chiang was among the world's leading statesmen when Japan finally surrendered in 1945. China became one of

five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The chapter of humiliation that began with the Opium War appeared to have finally been brought to a close.

Yet for Chiang and the KMT the victory over Japan proved pyrrhic. As territory in the most developed parts of the country was lost, so went most of the tax revenue base at a time when the government desperately needed funds to finance the war effort. To make up for lost revenue, revenue extraction became more rapacious and came at the expense of legitimacy (Boecking 2017). The same could be said of conscription and government administration more broadly. Meanwhile, the CCP under Mao's leadership tightened Party discipline, including Party control over the military, and conducted a brutal purge of unwelcome elements in Yan'an that strengthened Mao's power (Xiao 1999; Gao 2000). The CCP also demonstrated a remarkable capacity to offer an alternative discourse to appeal to the public, including the intelligentsia. In this discourse, propagated through CCP-controlled media outlets, including in KMT-dominated areas and through foreign reporters such as Edgar Snow, the CCP attacked the KMT for being autocratic and corrupt and promised freedom, democracy and constitutionalism (Xiao 1999).

Mao personally sang paeans to freedom and democracy that would be pleasing even to the ears of American visitors. In a legendary conversation in a Yan'an cave between Mao and Huang Yanpei (黄炎培), an eminent educator and democratic leader from the KMT government in Chongqing, Huang noted that historically organizations and states (dynasties) often rose rapidly and fell swiftly in cycles. Mao answered, "We have found a new path; we can break out of such cycles. This new path is that of democracy. Only under people's oversight will the government not slacken its efforts; only by everyone taking responsibility will the government continue to perform well when the (present) leaders are gone (Huang 1945)." The propagation of such rhetoric by Huang and others in government-controlled areas contributed to the CCP's winning of hearts and minds in the ensuing years.

With the Sino-Japanese War behind, Chiang and the KMT, in what appeared to be partly a response to CCP criticism and partly a reflection of resurgent Chinese pride,

decided that it was time to follow Sun Yat-sen's three-stage theory from military rule to tutelage to constitutionalism and lead the Republic of China into the phase of democratic constitutional government. A revised Republic of China Constitution was enacted by the National Assembly in December 1946 and went into effect a year later. On the surface this was a time of immense national pride. It appeared that the efforts at modern nation-building and state-building in the Republic of China were coming to fruition.

The CCP under Mao's leadership, however, boycotted the subsequent election (which elected Chiang the president). Instead, in spite of international mediation, the CCP and the KMT duked it out on the battlefield. As is well known, the KMT-led central government started with a much larger and better-equipped military force (Chassin 1965; Spence 1990). Yet Chiang, seeking to contain what would today be considered an insurgency, contended with a regime riven with fissures and corruption and made various strategic errors (Tsou 1967; Westad 2003; Lary 2015). In the epic battles of the Chinese Civil War that followed, the KMT-led government forces were no match for the CCP's superior discipline, growing mass appeal, and strong fighting spirit and strategies. On October 1, 1949, the victorious Mao led the CCP to install the People's Republic of China. Chiang and the KMT retreated to Taiwan, though the Republic of China retained its seat in the United Nations until 1971. The historian Harold Isaacs thus summed up this momentous shift in fortunes for the two contending revolutionary parties:

The Kuomintang [KMT], which had risen to the top in 1927, disappeared as a major ingredient. The Chinese Communist Party, having smothered whatever chance there might have been for the emergence of a new Chinese urban democracy, shaped itself through hardening years of war in the remoteness of rural China onto an instrument for winning and wielding power by the absolute use of force (Isaacs 1961, 318-9).

Marx could not have imagined that the land that he ridiculed nearly a century earlier would now be dominated by a dictatorial behemoth ruling in his name.

## **The Communist Party-State: The Mao era**

Prior to taking national power, the CCP under Mao's leadership showed great discipline as well as policy moderation as it had to contend with the KMT. As Mao got closer to taking national power, however, he announced that the new CCP-led regime would lean to one side, the side of socialism led by the Soviet Union, the CCP's long-time benefactor and guide (Mao 1959). Nonetheless, Mao and his comrades continued to adopt a coalition strategy to broaden the CCP's appeal and gain popular support on the advice of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and at a time when fighting in parts of the country had not yet stopped (Li 2001). In September 1949, on the eve of the official founding of the People's Republic of China, the CCP leadership convened a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and invited a substantial number of non-CCP delegates to participate in the conference. This CPPCC conference approved a *Common Program* and the *Organic Law of the Central People's Government* as the interim founding documents for the PRC state and central government.

Mao took a cavalier attitude toward institutions and made use of such legislative bodies as the CPPCC at his convenience. The *Common Program* called for a National People's Congress (NPC) to serve as embodiment of highest state power and elect the Central People's Government Committee (中央人民政府委员会). It also stipulated that before the NPC existed the CPPCC plenary session would serve in the NPC's place. In practice, a CPPCC plenary meeting was not convened again until the NPC came into being in 1954. Thus the Central People's Government Committee (CPGC) was the highest state power between 1949 and 1954. As the CPGC Chairman, Mao was clearly the supreme leader.

The CPGC initially included the Government Administrative Council (GAC, headed by Zhou Enlai), the People's Revolutionary Military Commission (Mao), the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate. In 1952, as China began to turn to central planning, a State Planning Commission (SPC), overseeing eight industrial ministries, was added with Soviet help and charged with the drafting and implementation of Five-Year Plans (the first five-year plan covered 1953-57).

Heeding Soviet advice, Mao invited a substantial number of non-CCP figures to join the central government (GAC) leadership, including three of six Vice Chairmen, two of four Vice Premiers, and 14 of 34 ministers (Bo 1991). Huang Yanpei, for example, was made Vice Premier and Minister of Light Industry. Nonetheless, the CCP leadership formed Party committees and groups in every government agency to maintain firm control.

As late as October 1952, Mao resisted the formal drafting of a Constitution and wanted to wait until China had entered into socialism. Ironically, it was Joseph Stalin who cajoled Mao into agreeing that the People's Republic of China should have a Constitution. Amid the Cold War, it was necessary for socialist countries to put on the appearance of having a Constitution. Hence the Constitution of 1954 was drafted and adopted (Weng 2007; Han 2004).

The 1954 Constitution was modeled on the 1936 Soviet Constitution in terms of state organization structure and citizens' rights and duties (Teiwes 1987). The NPC is the fountain of state power and has the authority to amend the constitution and enact laws, elect the President and Vice Presidents (previously translated as Chairman and Vice Chairmen), and ratify the appointment of the State Council Premier upon nomination by the President. The President would be the head of state and Chairman of the National Defense Committee. The State Council, led by the Premier, would become synonymous with the central government (The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China 2000).

The 1954 Constitution projected an image of institutional constraints on power. In practice, the CCP leadership, partly in response to complaints from Party stalwarts that too many positions were offered to non-CCP luminaries, chose to sideline the non-CCP luminaries into largely ceremonial positions on the NPC or the CPPCC. Worse was still to come for them in future political campaigns. Around the same time (1953-54), Mao, taking a page from Chinese history, abolished the six pan-regional military-administrative councils and moved the regional leaders to Beijing, away from their regional bases. The Center took direct control of the provincial-level jurisdictions.

Just as Yuan Shikai chafed against the interim Constitution, Mao became increasingly frustrated with the trappings and routines of the newly emerging system. For someone who set his own schedule (indeed, top leaders in China at the time learned to adapt to Mao's schedule of working at night), the ceremonial functions of the President were an onerous burden. Another form of constraint was emerging for the likes of Mao who had spent a lifetime plotting wars and battles. For central planning relied on technocrats good with numbers and details. As China moved to adopt a Soviet-style planning system, Mao initially placed the State Planning Commission directly under the GAC, reporting to him. Yet soon he was confronted with stacks of documents with mind-boggling amounts of details and often signed them off without a good grasp of the contents. He was probably relieved that the SPC became a constituent part of the State Council with the enactment of the PRC Constitution.

As the history of the CCP's struggle against the ruling KMT revealed, Mao was superbly adept at mobilizing political support for attacks against "enemies". Whereas China's push for a planned economy required growing bureaucratization, politically Mao was in command. Riding on the wave of revolutionary tide, everything seemed possible. Even without central planning, there was growing state control. Following years of chaos, the imposition of control and the appearance of order were initially welcomed by most, especially as the CCP used the authority it had acquired on the battlefield to impose draconian measures to bring down inflation. On various matters, dictatorial methods appeared to be both efficient and effective. Drug addicts were forced to quit, cold turkey style. Many prostitutes rounded up in Shanghai were sent to remote Xinjiang to marry soldiers who had recently fought in the civil war and were then garrisoned in the sparsely-populated frontier region.

Forged in the titanic struggle with the Nationalist government over more than two decades, the Chinese revolutionary state of the CCP, led by leaders who used to be targets of crackdowns and suppressions, now became an instrument of terror against real or imagined enemies. Mao and his comrades were bent on transforming an old society through class struggle and quickly launched one campaign after another to suppress

various groups, specially “counter-revolutionaries.” Since China, then with about 600 million people, was overwhelmingly agrarian, the pursuit of land reform, which often resulted in the killing of landlords, was of fundamental political, economic, and cultural significance; it decimated the social class that provided a major pillar for the traditional order. Many other campaigns would follow and a widely circulated list enumerates no fewer than 55 campaigns during Mao’s rule (Cell 1977; Bennett 1976).

The intensity of the domestic campaigns was heightened following Mao’s fateful decision to send Chinese forces to Korea to fight against American-led United Nations forces in Fall 1950. This decision was accompanied by a domestic campaign to ‘Resist America, Aid Korea’ and it firmly put China on the opposite side of the United States, a confrontation that would not ease until Nixon’s visit to China in 1972. In consequence, the U.S. imposed an embargo on the PRC and thwarted Mao’s ambition of a quick takeover of Taiwan.

With Stalin’s death in 1953 and Khrushchev’s attacks on Stalin in 1956, Mao began to move into his own orbit. In 1956, concerned about the revolts that occurred in Hungary and Poland in the post-Stalin era, Mao sought to enliven the system with the Hundred Flowers Campaign to encourage the airing of different opinions and constructive criticism. The criticism turned out to be sharper and more vociferous than Mao (Party Chairman), Vice Chairman Liu Shaoqi, and Secretary General Deng Xiaoping had anticipated. They turned on the critics and launched the Anti-rightist Campaign, which wrecked the careers of more than a half million of people, especially those with an intellectual background or had played a part or collaborated with the old regime. Most importantly, the Anti-Rightist Campaign revealed how harshly the regime would deal with what today might be considered its ‘critical citizens’ and taught survivors to refrain from speaking up. China had become what Avery Goldstein called a ‘bandwagon polity’, with officials eager to follow cues from Mao (Goldstein 1991).

Being someone hailing from rural Hunan, Mao found special comfort in rural affairs. Most importantly, he was a firm believer in transforming rural organizations

to unleash the productive potential of peasants obsessed with owning more land of their own and thus to provide the surplus needed for industrialization and national power. This obsession of his in a 'bandwagon polity' became the fuse for what turned into the Great Leap Forward as, following the Soviet success with sputnik, China joined the Soviet Union in efforts to catch up with capitalist economies in late 1957.

Mao's "secret" for China to leap forward in (heavy) industrialization was by mobilizing the masses, a move that played to his strengths as revolutionary strategist but with an emphasis on producing iron and steel that even the planners found hard to resist (Bachman 2006). Nonetheless, in promoting the Great Leap Forward Mao relied on the Party faithful, including especially his trusted Party secretaries in the provinces (Yang and Xu and Tao 2014). There was no patience for bureaucratic caution and the State Statistical Bureau was largely suspended. Rural residents were rushed into people's communes. Able bodies were mobilized to build water works and, in both urban and rural areas, to smelt iron and steel.

If the Great Leap Forward had worked, it would have enabled Mao to lead China onto a different path from that of Soviet-style planning and established Mao as the preeminent leader in the socialist bloc. In reality, however, the messianic Great Leap Forward resulted in the worst famine in human history. In the aftermath of the famine, Mao lost "interest" in personally steering the economy and let Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, Deng Xiaoping to help lead the economic stabilization and recovery, only to become disappointed with the right-leaning tendencies of his colleagues (Yang 1996; Yang 2012). In 1962 Mao began to turn his attention to class struggle and directed his colleagues to pursue a socialist education campaign in the countryside (Baum 1975). In the ensuing years, Mao became increasingly disgruntled with his senior colleagues, especially President Liu Shaoqi. In 1966, Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (CR). A constant refrain of Mao's was against bureaucratism and the CR is best known for Mao's mobilization of Red Guards to attack Party and government apparatuses, most of which were paralyzed as "power seizures" occurred in ministries and organizations (MacFarquhar 2009; White III 1989; Harding 1991). Numerous

members of the elite as well as many others with “bad” class backgrounds were persecuted to death, including Liu Shaoqi and former Defense Minister Peng Dehuai. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, in particular, were attacked for “revisionism” and for “taking the capitalist road.” Huang Yanpei, whom Mao had referred to as a representative of the bourgeoisie, could not have expected to fare well in this extreme political environment but Huang died at the age of 87 before the CR had erupted. His widow, however, was subjected to much abuse and committed suicide in January 1968.

Through all this, Mao simply ignored the Constitution and laws or Party rules. For more than a decade, he refused to convene a national Party Congress. It was not until Liu Shaoqi and others had been purged that Mao finally convened such a Congress in 1969 and packed the Party Central Committee with his handpicked people. China degenerated into personal dictatorship during the late Mao era. Luckily for China, Mao’s elder son Mao Anying (the other son was mentally handicapped) was killed during the Korean War and thus not available to succeed Mao. Even then Mao allowed his nephew to gain great influence and appeared to have intended for his widow and his nephew to play major roles in national leadership following his death (Xin Ziling 2010).

With the abandonment of normal working procedures, Premier Zhou Enlai, who was also under pressure from the radicals, had to form a special group to keep the State Council functioning. When the political chaos subsided in 1969, Mao and Zhou cut more than half of the State Council ministries. Despite the Maoist rhetoric against bureaucracy, it should be noted that the life of an individual Chinese during these years was bound up with the state, through their work units or production brigades (Walder 1988). Thus Martin King Whyte notes that in practice Mao was not against bureaucracy at all (Whyte 1989).

The Chinese official verdict was that the Cultural Revolution brought China to the brink of collapse. By the time of Mao’s death, China was among the world’s poorest countries and a prominent example of misrule (Tsou 1983). Ironically, Mao’s genius for destruction meant that China did not systematically practice Soviet central planning for

an extended time period and this deficiency from the perspective of central planning became an advantage when China turned to the pursuit of economic reforms.

### **The Party-State in the Post-Mao Era: Market Reforms and Administrative Rationalization**

Numerous volumes have been written about China's political changes and socioeconomic development in the post-Mao era. Because of limited space, I will skip the politics of transition into the age of reform except to note that much of the emphasis in the immediate post-Mao years was on getting the institutions of state to function again following the turmoil and destruction of the Cultural Revolution years. To give a sense of the scale of the restoration, the number of State Council constituent organs more than doubled to reach 100 between 1977 and 1981.

The most obvious change is simply the disappearance of Mao the personal dictator. In the 1980s, politics at the top were dominated by Party elders, especially Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun, but the elders also left much space for reformist leaders Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, and Wan Li (Tsou 1995; Vogel 2011). Showing their distaste for Mao as the Communist Party Chairman, the Chinese leadership banished the title of 'Party Chairmanship' in 1982 and replaced it with 'General Secretary'. With the introduction of retirement norms in the early 1980s and the abolition of the Central Advisory Commission (of the Elders) in 1992, significant progress has been made to regularize the processes of leadership selection and succession. In spite of some setbacks, a form of collective leadership, centered on the CCP's Politburo Standing Committee, has largely held.

The relationship between the Party and the state has been fraught with unease throughout the PRC's history (Zheng 1997). With Mao, Chairman of the CCP Central Committee, mobilizing the masses to attack the Party and state institutions during the Cultural Revolution, the CR marked an especially poisonous era in Party-state relations. At the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1987, reformist leaders, with Deng's blessing, put together a blueprint for the separation of Party and government, including gradual

abolishment of party groups in government bodies and the weakening of Party organizations such as the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (Yang 2016). This initiative was aborted in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Crisis. Instead, much more systematically than the Manchus/Qing resisted political reforms in the late nineteenth century, Communist Party leaders have shown no sign of loosening the Party's leash but have repeatedly invoked fears of crisis and doom to strengthen the Communist Party's predominant position in response to changing circumstances.

First and foremost, the Party leadership has kept a tight grip on the military, maintaining a tradition of Party command over the gun dating back to the Sanwa Reorganization of the military in 1927 (having a Party rep in each company unit). Mao's harsh attack on Marshall Peng Dehui during the Great Leap Forward stemmed partly from a fear of military insubordination. During the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping chose not to take up the top Party position and was a vice premier in the government lineup but he assumed the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission and no one doubted that he was the paramount leader. After Deng's formal retirement from the CMC in 1989, the top positions of Party, State, and Military have been concentrated in the hands of the same person, with the exception of the 2002-2004 transition between Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.

Second, through the nomenklatura system, the Central Party leadership controls top appointments of all key institutions throughout the country, including the selection of leaders of the so-called democratic parties (Hon S. Chan 2004). In addition to direct leadership of the national legislature and the State Council, members of the Politburo Standing Committee also have Party organs for leadership of Party discipline (anticorruption), propaganda, economy and finance, law and stability maintenance, and for various specific purposes such as Taiwan Affairs. Within the State Council, only one or two government ministers are led by token non-CCP members and some of the State Council agencies actually report to the Party's leading groups.

Through interlocking institutions and leaders, the Communist Party leadership and those of the state institutions, including the armed forces, are bound together. Thus there

is much credence to the conventional idea of the Party-state. As such, today's Chinese leaders possess far more potent organizational resources than their predecessors in the Qing and Republican periods.

The configurations of the Chinese state have undergone substantial change in the post-Mao era. In a nutshell, post-Mao leaders have sought to promote institutional reforms in their quest for growth and power. Changes in the economy under the rubric of reform and opening up have in turn facilitated certain types of rationalizing institutional reforms and created demand for others in order to curb and cope with unruly markets and practices and promote socio-economic order (Yang 2004). Major government restructuring requires the approval of the National People's Congress, which has done so regularly since the late 1980s (1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008 and 2013).

These government restructuring efforts began with downsizing of the bureaucracy. In the words of then Premier Zhao Ziyang, 'the problems of overstaffing institutions, overlapping and ambiguous responsibilities and low efficiency have reached an intolerable level.' (Zhao 1982) As the Chinese economy became more market-oriented, the focus of government reforms also shifted toward the transformation of government functions, especially after the CCP Party Congress adopted the concept of building a socialist market economy in 1992. Ministries at the core of the planned economy, from metallurgy to petroleum, were turned into central-administered SOEs or abolished. Amid the Asian Financial Crisis in 1998, Premier Zhu Rongji slashed the number of ministries and commissions from 40 to 29. A recurring theme has been the combination and rationalization of government administrations with overlapping functions. There have also been efforts to streamline and rationalize government approvals, especially to improve the business environment but also to make lives easier for ordinary people, whether they are seeking a driver's license or applying for a passport.

While China's leaders have eliminated most industrial ministries, they have also had to devise new mechanisms to cope with the "turmoil" or "chaos" that have emerged with an increasingly market-oriented economy. Following a financial crisis in 1993, the Chinese leadership revamped the fiscal system in favor of the central government and

also began to restructure the People's Bank of China. Over time regulatory commissions have been established for securities, insurance, and banking. Dedicated ministerial or ministerial-ranked regulatory institutions (in parentheses are abbreviations for the corresponding American regulatory agencies) have also been established in the following areas: Environmental Protection (EPA); Quality Supervision, Inspection & Quarantine (CPSC); Work Safety [also State Administration of Coalmine Safety] (OSHA); Food and Drug (FDA); Civil Aviation (FAA). These regulatory institutions increasingly look like their American or European counterparts. The China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA), for example, was explicitly named to mimic the U.S. FDA, which has a sterling reputation among American regulators.

Most other government ministries and administrations also possess significant regulatory functions and some, such as the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Administration of News, Publications, Radio & TV and the Administration of Religious Affairs, act both as regulators and political gatekeepers (Yang 2017).

### **Contingency**

In examining the changes in the patterns of Chinese state organizations and political power over time, one should not be misled into thinking that all were over-determined and were inevitable. Nothing was further from the truth.

Two factors are especially worthy of attention. One is the role of leadership, which our discussions so far have touched upon. The other factor is the element of contingency. In fact, in recent years discussing the big 'what ifs' has become a fashionable pastime in certain Chinese circles, particularly in contemplating the difficult courses of history China might have taken had some of the pivotal leaders in Chinese history died at different times than had been the case.

To begin with, what if the Empress Dowager Cixi had died either 10 years earlier or 10 years later than 1908 and if the reformist Emperor Guangxu had not died suddenly in 1908. The social critic Liu Zaifu, for example, conjectured that if the Empress Dowager Cixi had died 10 years earlier, then Emperor Guangxu's Reforms of 1898 would have

stood a good chance of getting implemented. If the Empress Dowager had died ten years later, she would have been able to lend her considerable political authority to the promotion of constitutional reforms. In both cases, the Great Qing might have had a real chance of evolving into a constitutional monarchy and the 1911 Revolution might not have occurred, dramatically altering the course of subsequent Chinese and global history (Interview with Liu Zaifu. Ifeng.com. November 15, 2015).

Another key individual was Yuan Shikai, the late Qing modernizer and strongman who became the President of the Republic of China. Yuan's attempt to become the Hongxian emperor in 1915-16 turned into debacle. Yet even the humiliated Yuan Shikai still retained enormous power and clout. What if Yuan had not died in June 1916 at the age of 56 but had stayed around to help revive the Republic and strengthen the central government?

Then there is Mao. Tang Tsou (2000), in a posthumous article 'Interpreting the Revolution in China,' sought to apply the rational choice framework to the study of the Chinese revolution. Yet he came away keenly aware of Mao's crucial role, particularly in the survival of the Red Army during the Long March. He also noted that Mao was almost killed in an air raid in the spring 1948 had Chen Boda not rushed to cajole a reluctant Mao to go to the air raid shelter (Ye 1993). What would have become the Chinese revolution had Chiang Kai-shek been successful in annihilating the Red Army? Or if Japan had not invaded China in 1937? Or had Mao been killed in 1948?

Finally there's Mao's elder son Ma Anying (1922-1950), whom Mao Zedong apparently sought to groom to become a major player in Chinese politics. What if Mao Anying, who joined Commander-in-Chief Peng Dehuai for a short sojourn, had not perished during the Korean War in 1950? Had he survived, Mao Anying would have been 54 at the time of his father's death and would likely be in the prime of his political career. What would China and the Chinese state be like with a Soviet-educated Mao Anying at the helm?

## **Conclusion**

As this survey concludes, a bit of exercise in contrast and comparison is in order. The Qing dynasty was a highly successful enterprise of colonial conquest. A growing body of historical research points to how diligently and seriously Manchu rulers took the governance of their expansive domains. These autocratic rulers also showed much political and cultural sophistication, presenting a Chinese face to the Han Chinese but other (esp. Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian) faces to subjects in the rest of the empire (Smith 2015). Much of the legitimacy of Manchu rule lay with its acceptance and continuation of Chinese imperial rule but the Manchu rulers adapted and devised various governance mechanisms as they expanded the Qing empire (Hostetler 2001). Some of these institutional mechanisms, however, became hindrances to Qing dynastic survival in the world of modern states and thus made it especially difficult for China as well as the Chinese state to make the transition to the modern age.

The first to adopt parliamentary elections, the Republic of China went through multiple and often painful phases of political turmoil except for the Nanking decade under KMT leadership. A member of the victorious allies during WWII, it plunged into civil war shortly thereafter and collapsed altogether on the Chinese Mainland by the end of the 1940s. The enduring theme throughout the era of Republican China was the persistent, occasionally hopeful but ultimately futile efforts to strengthen the state, particularly the central government. All was not lost, however, because under KMT leadership the remnant of the Republic of China rose from the ashes on Taiwan and in the 1990s became a liberal democratic polity in fulfillment of Sun Yatsen's vision. The ROC has thus weaved a sorrowful yet ultimately inspiring narrative of state building and democratic transformation, dispelling the notion that Confucian societies were culturally anti-democratic (Kim 1994).

Originally animated by a foreign ideology (Marxism-Leninism) and foreign support, the Chinese Communist Party adapted and indigenized under Mao's leadership and captured national power from the KMT by following in the latter's footsteps. The CCP has been able to retain much of the territory of Qing Empire but its approach to governance represented a far more radical break from Chinese imperial tradition. For the

Mao era, CCP rule, under the rubric of class struggle, was initially destructive of all that was traditional, destroying the landed elites in the early 1950s and attacking Confucius in Mao's last years. The CCP's domination over Chinese society was totalistic in ambition if not in reality (Tsou 1988). An era of colossal misrule, the Mao era was marked by the calamitous Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. But the pains of such misrule at a time when much of the rest of East Asia was leaping ahead economically also served, to paraphrase Francois Furet, to disabuse the Chinese of the illusion of Communism and prepared the ground for the pursuit of economic reforms under newer and more cosmopolitan leaders in the post-Mao era (Furet 2000; Yang 1996).

In an era of globalization and economic liberalization, the Chinese Party-state has been repurposed for the pursuit of growth, albeit on territory that, figuratively and literally, had been cleared by Maoist rule. As it has sought, in fits and starts, to reshape the Chinese economy and society, the Chinese government, both intentionally and in response to the changes in the broader institutional environment, has undergone significant changes. In particular, the institutions for the planned economy were mostly rationalized while regulatory institutions in many domains have been established or reconfigured to suit an more market-driven and globally inter-connected economy. Nonetheless, the Chinese leadership has jealously guarded the CCP's political dominance, promoting more market-friendly reforms but standing guard against a liberal political vision. Order and governability, rather than democratic participation, have been the central preoccupation of the Chinese CCP leadership. This defensiveness, sometimes bordering on paranoia, stems from multiple sources, including the CCP's own underground past and the fear of 'color revolutions'.

Fear of decay and rot within the Party has been a perennial concern of Communist Party leaders as they knew the KMT's ignominy of defeat on the Mainland was to a large extent due to internal problems (Tsou 1967). Mao was notorious for the many campaigns and purges that caused much suffering and left numerous scars in the Chinese psyche. Post-Mao leaders have been especially concerned about the corrosive

effects of corruption, which tends to thrive in hybrid political economies like China's (Wedeman 2012). Following repeated campaigns to curb corruption by his predecessors, Xi Jinping, together with anti-corruption czar Wang Qishan, launched an audacious campaign beginning in 2013 to root out numerous corrupt officials in the Party, government, and the armed forces, and tighten party discipline.

Yet one factor, China's own legacy of divided sovereignty dating back to the late Qing Dynasty, stands out: Hong Kong (part of the PRC since 1997) and Taiwan represent already-existing alternatives and are seen as bases for potential subversion even though they have contributed to the rapid economic resurgence of the Mainland with capital and important ideas (White 2016). In important ways, the existence of Hong Kong and Taiwan as alternatives and domestic considerations such as central-provincial relations, speak to fundamental constitutional concerns dating back to the Qing Dynasty (Kuhn 2002).

One might even go back much further. In a volume published in 2015, Qin Hui (2015), an eminent historian at Qinghua University in Beijing, reviewed China's modern history from the late Qing Dynasty through the Republican period from the perspective of China's long struggle with imperial autocracy that was an inheritance from the Qin Dynasty. Qin Hui left no doubt in the readers' mind that he thought contemporary China had yet to go beyond the Qin imperial system. Qin Hui's book was promptly banned. It was lost on the censors that the ban itself underscored the contemporary relevance of Qin's argument. It also reminds us that the remaking of the Chinese state continues to refract the tensions articulated by Weber and Jessop at the start of this chapter. In view of China's size and presence today, how China reconciles these tensions have profound consequences within China and beyond.

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