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The Changing Concept of Chinese Socialism:
The Changing Discourse of Socialism in the Reports Given to the National Congress of the Communist Party of China
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Abstract:
The Communist Party of China is the largest political party in the world and it leads the most populous country in the world with over a billion people under its rule. China has just risen to being the second largest economy in the world and the economic growth of China shows little sign of stopping. Meanwhile massive changes have occurred in Chinese society, not least in terms of economic policy, that go against the traditional communist thinking. The Communist Party of China has fully embraced market economy, but still insists on keeping a monopoly on political power in China.

The Party permeates trough every strata of the society. The Chinese society and the Party that leads it are so intertwined that it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. The “Party-State” as it is sometimes called and the cultural characteristics of China explain in part how the Party has managed to stay in power and even thrive when other Communist parties in the world have fallen. Most of the credit goes to the Party itself though.

With the swing to market economy the Communist Party of China is facing a problem: how to justify its claim to legitimacy when the country is no longer a socialist one? This thesis aims to show that the Communist Party of China is very flexible in its ideological commitment and that the changes in ideology are not merely desperate efforts of old men clinging to power at any cost. The Communist Party of China has change in its very core. With every new generation of leaders a new ideological framework is erected.
The thesis follows changes in the ideology and the changing legitimacy of the Party from 1969 to 2007 by analysing key speeches given to the National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The ideological change is represented by the language used in the speeches, so by applying discourse analysis to the material the various discourses and their change can be identified.

Tiivistelmä:


Tutkielma seuraa ideologian ja puolueen vallan legitimiteetin muutosta vuodesta 1969 vuoteen 2007 tutkimalla Kiinan Kommunistisien Puolueen Puoluekokouksessa pidettyjä puheita. Ideologinen muutos näkyy puheessa käytetyssä kielessä, joten diskurssianalyysia soveltamalla eri diskurssit ja niiden muutos voidaan tunnistaa.
“We are the Communist Party, and we decide what communism means.”

- Chen Yuan
1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The collapse of the Soviet block came as a shock to the world. It had seemed as if the Cold War would drag on indefinitely. The Russians had realised the facts too late and Mikhail Gorbachev was unable to prevent collapse. While the West celebrated a victory over communism the Chinese leaders in Beijing were taking notice. Events at Tiananmen Square had also upset the balance against them and it appeared that Chinese Communists were next to fall. The Communist Party of China was made of a harder matter than that though.

The Party had already started its transition to the seemingly market-dominated system when the Berlin Wall came down and the entire eastern block with it. China is a unique country and culture, with its puzzling and often paradoxical combination of socialism, market economy and traditional Chinese values. China has somehow managed to hold on to a socialist identity while reaping the benefits of rapid economic growth. China is a superpower-in-being and will make an impact to the world.

Many misconceptions about China and particularly about the Communist Party persist. The image of old men clinging to a dead ideology is hard to dispel, while in reality the Party is very much alive and continuously re-inventing itself to better fulfill its tasks. The aim of this thesis is to show how the Party is changing its ideological doctrines to meet the challenges of a changing world. The thesis will also show how change is deeply rooted in the fundamental thinking of the Party. On the other hand the Chinese society tends to be very conservative and generally speaking tends to prefer seeking answers from past experience, rather than to experiment. Yet the Party, state and the Chinese society at large are so intertwined that it is sometimes difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins.

During the course of this work the broad lines of the Communist Party of China, the history of the Party and changes in it’s ideology are first discussed in chapter two. This sets the stage for the analysis of the material in chapters five trough seven. Chapter three deals with the complicated relationship between the Party and the Chinese society. It aims to shed light on some of the cultural aspects that
make the Chinese Communist Party and China as unique as they are. Chapter four introduces the material, method and the research problem.

Chapter five begins the analysis by covering the first two of the six speeches that form the material for the thesis. Chapters six and seven follow the same pattern of having two speeches each. The material is grouped this way based on the discussion in chapter two. Finally the conclusions make up chapter eight.

1.2. Previous Research

There is clearly no shortage of research on China, so problem is not in finding the literature, but rather to weed out the uninteresting to find the relevant and important. An exhaustive list is obviously impossible to assemble, so only a very short selection of works has to suffice.

The Party legitimacy is a frequent topic, but often only as a side note on wider issues on China. For example otherwise excellent “The Chinese Communist Party in Reform” (Brodsgard-Zheng ed. 2006) doesn’t explicitly investigate the legitimacy of the Party rule while it does well in explaining the Party’s response to the changing situation in China. Likewise “China and Democracy” (Zhao 2000) while it clearly deals with legitimacy of the Party it does not fully dedicate itself to the topic.

Among the research that explicitly deals with the Party’s legitimacy is an article by Gilley - Holbig (2009), “The Debate on Party Legitimacy in China: a mixed quantative/qualitative analysis“, considers the Party legitimacy from a Chinese point of view and underlines the importance of ideology as a key source of legitimacy for the Party even in if the material benefits are important as well. Brady’s (2009), “Mass Persuasion as a Means of Legitimation and China’s Popular Authoritarianism“ suggests an important shift from the old revolutionary strategy of legitimacy to a new ‘Party in power’ -strategy.


Finally Lu and Simons (2006) give their take on the Party’s ideological change in “Transitional Rhetoric of Chinese Communist Party Leaders in the Post-Mao Reform Period: Dilemmas and Strategies”, a work that in terms of methodology and material is probably closest to this thesis.

2. The Chinese Communist Party

2.1. Overview

The Communist Party of China, also known as Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the largest party in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). It claims to have over 70 million members (People’s Daily Online 2007), making it the largest political party in the world. Even though it is not the sole party officially recognised in China it is by far the most influential and it effectively rules the country. While it is not entirely correct to say that China is a one-party state as there are eight other so-called “democratic parties in China. The CCP’s leading role is inscribed in the constitution of the PRC and all the other parties in China are only considered to have an “advisory role” without any real power making China a de facto one-party –state and it can be safely treated as such.

The Party considers itself as the “[...] vanguard of the Chinese working class as well as the Chinese people and the Chinese nation.” Ideologically it adheres to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the Mao Zedong Thought, the Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Three Represents in it’s actions. The ideological principles are successively built on top of each other and they are further explained in chapter 2.3. The Party exercises what it calls ”centralised democracy”, which means that while the party members are subordinates to the higher-ups in the party they are expected to raise problems and due critique to the Party leadership. (People’s Daily Online 2009)

The highest authority in the Party belongs to the National Congress of the Party (NCP) and the Central Committee (CC), elected by the Congress. The NCP meets at least every five years and it’s primary
functions are to hear and examine reports made by the Central Committee and Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, revise the Party constitution, discuss major questions concerning the Party and finally to elect a new Central Committee and Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Similar organisational structure is in place for provincial and local levels. (People’s Daily Online 2009.)

2.2. Brief history of the Chinese Communist Party

The Party was officially founded in Shanghai in 1921 with Li Dazhao and Cheng Duxiu as the leading founding members. Along with Li and Cheng a handful of others were present, including Mao Zedong. Together the men represented a mere 56 members of the newly-found Party. The Party was born into a country that had almost none of conditions that Marx had in mind when he formulated his theories. The proletarian revolution did not have proletariat. The newly formed communists faced fierce competition from other ideological groups, armed bands and revolutionists of all kinds. In this crowded ideological space they took the advice of foreign Comintern advisors and merged the party with the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) a year later. (Brown 2009, 34-39.) The antagonistic relationship between the two allies flared from time to time and culminated in 1927. A massacre perpetrated by the KMT where hundreds of communists were killed (Gray 1990, 226). The Shanghai massacre left the Party in tatters and ultimately changed the direction of the Party.

It was during this time that Mao begun to rise to prominence. Virtually leaderless and being hunt by the KMT the communists disobeyed their Soviet advisors and took their struggle to the countryside. Focusing on the rural peasantry for support was perhaps the defining innovation of Mao. For orthodox Marxist advisers it was dangerous deviation from the original doctrine, but for Mao it was the natural thing to do. In 1934 Kuomintang launched an all-out attack on communist stronghold and forced them to take on what would later be called the “Long March”. During the march Mao further solidified his role as the leader of the CCP. The Japanese invasion in 1937 forced the two bitter enemies to unite once again. The Second United front was not all that united however, as much as they detested the Japanese mutual distrust was undermining their actions. (Brown 2009, 46-49.) There was indeed a score to be settled after the Japanese were taken care of. After the Japanese defeat in the Second World War Kuomintang and the communists set about settling that score. Last time they fought one another the KMT scored a decisive victory leaving the communists running for their lives. The second time it
was the KMT that was on losing side, eventually the civil war between the two ended in Kuomintang being exiled in Taiwan and the founding of the People’s Republic of China on 1st of October 1949 with CCP firmly at the helm.

The Party now faced the task of confirming its rule against minor rebel groups, carrying out reforms and in general rebuilding the country. The early years were bloody; landowners, former KMT members and sympathisers, dissidents and intellectuals were purged by the Party. What followed was worse. The “Great Leap Forward” starting in 1959 attempted to jump-start the development of Chinese economy and industry at the expense of agriculture. The Great Leap Forward proved to be a disaster that destroyed what little was left of China and cost possibly up to tens of millions of lives (Brown 2009 57, 66-68). Finally the traumatic upheaval of the Cultural Revolution roughly between 1966 and 1976 destroyed the Party from the inside and sent the entire country in chaos.

Meanwhile a clique of relatively low-level Party members led by Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, known as the Gang of Four, managed to gain substantial power partly in collusion with Lin Biao. There was a decade of chaos that still haunts the Chinese leaders. Mao’s death in 1976 put an end to the turbulent and bloody era in China’s history. The decades to follow also saw bloodshed, but nothing in magnitude of what happened during the Mao era.

A year after Mao’s death Deng Xiaoping came on top after a power struggle for leadership after Mao. Deng set China to the course it is now taking. Economic reforms took place, the country opened up to the world and pragmatism won over idealism. Deng who was twice purged by Mao, but later rehabilitated was finally in charge. The leaders coming after him followed the guidelines he set up, in good but also in bad. The story of modern China really begins with Deng, but it was Mao years that shaped him. The 80s proved to be a decade of progress in China. Economic reforms, rebuilding the infrastructure and establishing the rule of law became Party’s main concerns during this time. Feelings of optimism ran high and hope for political liberation in the wake of economic liberation was unmistakeable. While the Party was enthusiastically pushing for economic reforms it had absolutely no intention of giving up political power. The students on Tiananmen Square soon found out just that. (Brown 2009, 90.)
Ultimately Deng bears the responsibility for Tiananmen (Brown 2009, 99). His commitment to the Party and perhaps more importantly to stability led him to sanction the crackdown. The turbulent past and the Cultural Revolution were without doubt on his mind during that time. After a brief post-Tiananmen chill and resurgence of conservative elements in the Party Deng once again turned the flow of events to reform and opening-up. Whatever hopes for democracy the people now harboured they would have to keep it to themselves.

The final chapter in the history of the Party tells the story of institutionalising the ever problematic question of succession, continuing reform, but also growing social discontent. Hopes for quick democracy have all but been buried, but grassroots action and calls for greater voice for people continue to this day. The turbulent days in Chinese history are for the time being over. While problems and contradictions continue to mar development a new generation of technocrat leaders are steering China slowly towards hopefully a more peaceful future.

2.3. Phases in development of Chinese Socialism

2.3.1. Beginnings of Chinese Marxism

China in the late 1800’s was in a sorry state of things. The longest ruling dynasty of Chinese history was losing its edge. The Chinese themselves were so used to upheaval and turmoil that the eventual fall of the dynasty was nothing short of a natural law; dynasties rise, prosper, wilt away and eventually perish only to be replaced by the next one. Over and over again.

More than anything Marxism was ushered into China by two men, Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu. It was Li who first promoted Marxist ideas in China and formulated the basis for Chinese Marxism. Initially Li, like many of his compatriots, was much closer to Chinese nationalism and ideas of communist anarchists, but was eventually persuaded by Marxism. Li’s ideas didn’t mature until in the hands of his young associate who would also ultimately put them into action. The young associate was to become the most important figure in the history of modern China, Mao Zedong. (Gray 1990, 202.)
The Chinese anarchists were the first to challenge and question the traditional Chinese values and traditions. Some strands of traditional Chinese philosophy, such as Daoism, had ‘proto-anarchist’ ideas, but nothing that would surmount to real anarchist thought. For example Laozi, one of the central figures of Daoism, accepted that rulers are needed, but greatly downplayed their significance in favour of more ‘organic’ society. Others were more harsh with their words in condemning the ruling elite. Around the 4th century B.C. a Daoist writer by the name Zhuangzi went as far as considering the rulers as nothing more than mere thieves. Ultimately the Daoists couldn’t formulate a proper theory and practice for anarchism. While seeking their ideal society they looked back into history and rejected the idea of progress and development. (Zarrow 1990, 7-8.)

In the Daoist minds progress moved backwards, away from civilisation and education. They never saw revolution as a way forward because they were too busy looking back. What the Daoists had was a dream of a sort of Rousseau-esque fantasy land. What they never really figured was how to get there, they didn’t have a proper theory, program or a path, let alone a plan for a change. Daoists fell short of being full pledged anarchists, but they laid the foundations for uniquely Chinese strain of anarchist thought. The defining feature of Chinese anarchism was its belief that the individual could not be separated from the society. Society and the individual would form an organic oneness that could not be divided into smaller pieces (ibid. 235). The problem of the individual versus the society never really progressed beyond the notion of an organic society. Even with the anarchists the individual doesn’t rise to the same level of prominence as it did in the west.

The first generation of Chinese anarchists were for the most part classically trained and were well versed in the teachings of Confucius. Their thoughts were therefore framed with the traditional Chinese philosophy. (ibid. 12) A second-generation anarchist Li Dazhao was no different in that respect. Li’s thoughts were based on the old Chinese ideas of constant flux and interdependence of yin and yang. He married those to the western idea of progress. In Li’s view the new rise of China was a historical necessity. He was driven by the desire to show that the sorry state of China was merely a temporary one and eventually China would rise again and take its rightful place as the leading nation in the world. Li placed his hopes on masses, not the individual or the elite, because only the masses could bring the great historical change. Even so the masses needed to be taught and lead by the educated elite. (Gray 1990, 201-202.)
For Li there was no conflict between the masses and the individual. He believed that the individual was capable of deciding for himself without coercion, but as long as it was within the greater context of mutual cooperation and unity. Humanity was moving along the same road and would eventually unite as one. How that unifying process takes place is not as important as the oneness that will follow. (Zarrow 1990, 218.)

The other early proponent of Communism in China was Chen Duxiu. Much like Li Chen felt that the masses would be the only force that could bring about change, but where Li seemed to believe that the individual would freely and willingly take part Chen stressed the need for hard work and organisation (ibid. 227). Where Li comes off undoubtedly as an idealist Chen is above all a pragmatist. For Chen the moment of epiphany came after he heard an American philosopher John Dewey lecturing in China in 1920. Dewey imported two ideas new to Chen that would change his way of thinking. Firstly that the only way to understand reality is to change it and secondly (according to Chen’s interpretation) that “facts can make laws, but laws cannot make facts”. (Gray 1990, 203.)

2.3.2. Mao Zedong Thought

While Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu have both fallen to obscurity the portrait of Mao still watches over the Tiananmen Square and China. He is the founding father of modern China and in his time was considered the most original Marxist theorist. Just like Li and Chen before him Mao took a long and winding road to Marxism. His initial concern, just like his teacher Li, was the liberation of the individual and the struggle against authoritarianism with the help of co-operative mass consciousness. However by 1920 he was persuaded by Marxism (ibid. 206).

Mao took in ideas from a wide range of people, both Chinese and western, and over time came up with an ideological construct that would be later called Maoism. How well Mao actually understood Marx is doubtful, at the very least he did not indulge himself with the works of Marx and Engels. Perhaps it doesn’t even matter that he didn’t take the Marx’s entire teachings to the letter because of all the countries where Communist parties took over China was quite possibly the least fitting for it. Instead he adopted a ‘revisionist’ stance to Marx (ibid. 206). Without the proletariat Mao followed his teacher
Li Dazhao’s thinking and placed the rural farmers as the focus of the class struggle. The emphasis on rural population and agriculture is one of the defining features of Mao Zedong Thought.

Another significant part in Mao’s thinking is that it places revolution over everything. Mao seems to have believed that revolution is the only way to reform China and return its former glory. The need for revolution in Mao’s mind did not end with the defeat of the bourgeoisie and other enemies of Socialism. In an often repeated quote by Mao:

“After the enemies with guns [presumably Kuomintang] have been wiped out there will be enemies without guns; they are bound to desperately struggle against us, and we must never regard these enemies lightly” (Mao 1967, 9).

The ‘enemy without guns’ that Mao speaks of are revisionists and any remnants of the bourgeoisie that may still linger. The idea of bourgeoisie still exists and there will always be people willing to take up to it and attempt to restore a new order to replace the Socialist order. According to him if the revolution is ever forgotten the inevitable consequence would be the restoration of the bourgeoisie rule.

So even after the apparent victory over bourgeoisie and other reactionary elements there would still be enemies, both inside and outside China, that were a threat. The power base for the continuous revolution is the rural population and the only means for a change. Mass participation is the driving force for change, as Mao states:

”The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them.” (ibid. 48).

There is a clear anti-elitist strain in Mao’s teachings. The elite, the educated and the intellectuals are all suspicious because there is always the possibility that they will attempt to bring back the bourgeoisie class. They are not members of the proletariat after all, so in Mao’s mind it would only be natural that they would branch off to make a new bourgeoisie.
2.3.3. Battling Dogmatism

The CCP divides its ideological construct into two discrete components; theory and thought. ‘Theory’ is made of “universal truths” of Marxist-Leninism and ‘thought’ is the application and interpretation of those facts in the Chinese context. While theory remains the same thought is constantly being updated in order to meet the demands of changing China. Thought then carries with it an immense weight and it is no surprise that the Chinese have been very careful in proclaiming the senior Party leaders’ ideas as ‘thoughts’. The Deng Xiaoping theory (note: not ‘thought’) was not raised to that level until two decades after it had already begun to transform the country almost beyond recognise. For decades only Mao had the sufficient political prowess to have his ideas recognised as thought. (Chang 1996, 377-378.)

This theory-thought –model makes the Chinese socialism much more capable for change than one would expect. The thought also needs to be interpreted and applied. Deng Xiaoping used this to his advantage when he told to “seek truth form the facts”. According to Deng Mao realised that China’s road to successful revolution was different to what Marx had predicted. (Deng 1984, 141.) While seeking truth from the facts was a way for Mao to adapt Marxist-Leninism to unique conditions of China that neither Marx nor Lenin could have possibly predicted. Deng used the phrase successfully to sideline hard line Maoists while maintaining the Mao Zedong thought himself.

Just as Marx and Lenin could not predict the future development of the world Mao could not see the radical changes that were to happen in the world; therefore a new interpretation was needed. Hard line Maoists, first and foremost being Lin Biao of course, were in Deng’s view backwards looking and by blindly following Mao they were in fact betraying him. (ibid. 143.)

While theories and thoughts of various kinds have been enshrined in the CCP constitution as the correct Chinese Socialism only in the case of Mao Zedong Though was there an attempt to make the doctrine dogmatic in the sense that it was to be taken literally. It appears that Lin Biao’s dogmatic approach to the official Party line is more an exception than a rule. More often than not new interpretations and reform have prevailed over dogmatism and backwardness. Biao was, of course, not the only one to
promote orthodox Maoism and opposing reform. None however have been as successful as Biao, nor has anyone been more throughoutly vilified.

Lin Biao became the main supporter of Maoism and in his mind it should be taken literally. His military experience led him to spread the ‘orthodox’ Mao Zedong Thought in the form of “Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong” or as it is popularly known, the Little Red Book. The book comprises of a number of quotes from the Chairman that are mostly taken out of context and “vulgarised” for popular appeal. (Martin 1982, 31.)

The book was specifically designed to fit into soldiers’ pockets so that they would always have the words of the Chairman with them for inspiration proving to be a powerful method for indoctrinating the army members. The book was also meant for the masses and soon became the main source of Maoist thought for the people. (ibid. 33.) Over the course of the Cultural Revolution the book became almost a mandatory fixture for the Red Guard members. This image of the Red Guard waving the little book has become a popular image of rampant ideological fever that ran rampant during the Cultural Revolution. It is in a sense a misleading image, because the Cultural Revolution and Lin Biao do not represent the constant ideological development and innovation that the CCP is marked by.

Lin Biao was eventually purged from the CCP and made the villain of the Cultural Revolution along with the Gang of Four. Biao died in a suspicious plane crash 1971 while the Gang of Four were tried and convicted in a show trial 1980. Deng uses Biao extensively as a warning example of the dangers of dogmatism. For example in most cases of first volume of “Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping” (Deng 1984) the speeches and articles included mention Biao numerous times and denounce him and his opinions.

Deng is perhaps the least concerned with ideology that other “strongmen” of Chinese political history. Deng had suffered greatly during the Cultural Revolution and his already pragmatic mindset was even further strengthened by those experiences. Time and time again he steered China away from ideological turmoil and hard line Maoism. For example Deng manoeuvred Mao’s chosen successor Hua Guofeng out of power because of his strict adherence to Maoism in the form of the “two
whatevers” that were: “Whatever policy Chairman Mao decided on, we shall resolutely defend; whatever directives Chairman Mao issued, we shall steadfastly obey”. (Bo 2004, 34.)

Deng’s most lasting legacy is, aside from reform and opening-up –policy that has made China as it is today, the continuing opposition to dogmatic interpretation of the official Party line. The leaders after Deng, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have broadly speaking followed the line that was set by Deng, but adding their own mark. Jiang carried on with the reforms with flamboyant fanfare, but his sincerity remains partly in question. The current leader of the Party Hu on the other hand, has kept a very low personal profile. Perhaps this marks the end of “strongmen” at helm of China.

2.3.4. Deng Xiaoping Theory

While the portrait of Chairman Mao still overlooks the Tiananmen Square his eventual successor as the paramount leader of China, Deng Xiaoping, has no such high honour. While the teachings of Mao barely have any significance in modern China Deng has made a lasting impression. The differences between Mao and Deng are striking and go beyond their teachings and political ideas. In contrast to Mao’s aggressive demeanour and overt masculinity Deng was a short quiet man. Where Mao had charisma in abundance Deng faded to the background and used his organisational skills to good effect.

Deng’s adolescent years were marked by the turmoil that plagued the newly found Republic of China. He proved to be an excellent student and was chosen to take part in work-study program in France. It was during this time that he became involved with the Communist Party and ended up taking care of the paper Red Light. After his time in France Deng was admitted to Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. Soon enough however he was called back to China to aid with the revolutionary struggle. (Chi Hsin 1978, 4-6.)

Deng proved to be a valuable resource to the Communist party during the war against the Japanese and the KMT. He served in a number of roles and made his way to the inner circle of the Party. Deng became named as “always correct”, ironically as much for his adherence to the principles of Mao Zedong Thought as his string of victories in the battlefield against the Kuomintang (ibid. 28). After the communist victory Deng was again in high demand and his abilities in organisation and negotiation
were put to good use. During this time he began to show dangerous tendencies and ideas. From the viewpoint of the Party leaders he was starting to seem a revisionist and increasingly also as a capitalist. In 1961 he was involved in making draft proposal concerning agricultural policies that decidedly brushed against the formal line of the Party, the draft was eventually approved without any consultation with Mao leading him to furiously state “which emperor decided this!” (Chi Hsin 1978, 38.)

Deng’s political line began to diverge from that of the orthodox Maoist line, this combined with his high status made him a target for the red guards during the Cultural revolution. Deng was stripped of all his official positions in 1966 and was put to work first at a Central Committee cadre school and later in a factory (ibid. 261). He would make a comeback seven years later and after a brief period of disfavour confirmed his position at the very top of the CCP.

Deng noticed the exactly the same point about socialist revolution as many other observers had also done; never before was a country so ill-equipped to make the transition to socialism than China actually succeeded in doing so. Mao had tried to make socialism work by sheer willpower, as if his personal belief in his own ideology could alter reality. Deng understood the need to act differently and instead of Maoist continuation of the class struggle he insisted that building the Chinese economy should take first place. In his mind China had entered socialism too quickly, sure the working class was now in power, but the country was still “feudal”. According to Deng Chinese socialism was still in its “primary stage” and only sweeping reforms could raise China from poverty, backwardness and the feudal stage of history. (Chang 1996, 382-384.)

Deng, like the early Chinese socialists, such as Li, was a Chinese nationalist over a communist. The KTM had failed to unite China, but the Communists had succeeded, therefore the Party was the best and only hope for China. Raising the Chinese people to their rightful place among the nations was his intention. Economic growth was paramount in achieving this goal and adopting market economy was the quickest way to economic growth. Dogmatic socialism be damned, the Chinese people deserved to rise back to the glory of the ages long gone. (ibid. 384.)

The Chinese people needed another thing in order to rise from the misery that was China after a century of poverty, disorganization and international humiliation. They, according to Deng needed stability.
Mao had put his belief in revolution and upheaval, like shaking a box with pieces of jig-saw puzzle in and hoping that they would somehow assemble themselves. Deng, with his own experiences, emphasized stability. He drew lessons from history and proclaimed that only the Communist Party of China could deliver such stability. For Deng the only thing that was beyond discussion was the supremacy of the Party as the ultimate leader of China. The cat may come in many colours in other issues, but as for the place of the Party the cat is decidedly monochrome. (Chang 1996, 389.)

Deng opened China up in a multitude of ways, not only did he reform the economy, but he brought in foreign technology, intellectuals that suffered under Mao once again became an asset as technology needed to be developed if China was ever to rise again. To be a good socialist didn’t mean carrying a revolutionary flag, but according to Deng anyone who “loves our socialist motherland and is serving socialism…” was indeed a good socialist, or red. (ibid. 387-388.)

Politically Deng’s China opened only up to a degree. He coined the Four Cardinal Principles that were beyond discussion. The principles are upholding the socialist path, people’s democratic dictatorship, leadership of the CCP and principle of upholding the Mao Zedong Thought. The principles are beyond debate. (Baum 1994, 79.)

2.3.5. The New Generation

Deng died in a respectable age in 2007. After his death Jiang Zemin, who had been the nominal head of the Party for some time, could finally claim undisputed premiership of the Party. Jiang was apparently less concerned with ideology than making a name for himself. Ironically then his addition to the Chinese Socialism does not bear his name. He made his addition to the development of Chinese Socialism by launching the Three Represents that first appeared early in the year 2000. Jiang’s addition came to life after a number of false starts which ultimately came down to Three Represents. They were meant to direct the policies of the Party in the new era heralded by Deng. (Lu-Simons 2006, 12.)

The principal concern of the Marxist parties has always been the productive forces of the society. Controlling the productive forces is the key to the proletarian triumph over the bourgeoisie. Therefore Jiang’s first ‘represent’ does not come as a surprise as it states that the Party should answer the
demands of developing the productive forces. Secondly the Party should support advanced culture and finally the Party should advance the interests of largest majority of the Chinese people. (Lu-Simons 2006, 12.)

He made previous attempts at reform, but those were not well received so he changed his position until he gained support. Jiang was at first reserved about Deng’s opening up –policy and warned of reactionary forces in the international community that were aiming to subvert Chinas socialist system, however after the policy of opening up became popular he became an enthusiastic supporter of it. (Bo 2004, 35.)

Finally Hu Jintao, the current premiere of China shows more dedication to ideology and genuine interest in finding a new path for his Party and China as a whole. He is upholding the “three represents” and developing them further. Hu has managed to make himself the sole interpreter of the three represents as the head of the Party and effectively sidelined Jiang. (ibid. 36.) Hu has also developed the ”scientific development concept” that was formally added to the CCP’s constitution in 2007 (People’s Daily Online 2007). Hu’s new development is reminiscent of Deng’s “seek truth from the facts” – slogan and the Three Represents. All three seek to be progressive and pragmatic while at least attempting to keep up the appearances of socialism. Another sign of Hu’s more temper nature compared to Jiang is that while Jiang could shout Maoist slogans Hu has used more analytical language and even western catch-phrases, such as sustainable development (Bo 2004, 37).

3. The Party and society

3.1. It’s not a ‘party’, but something else

The western political science holds all one-party systems as authoritarian by definition; democracy is only possible if one has multi-party system and elections. Though China is strictly speaking not a one-party state as there are eight other so-called ‘democratic parties’ that are allowed to function, but they are merely satellite parties that cannot diverge from the official line of the Party. The Chinese Communist Party quite obviously uses coercive policies that would not be possible in western
democracies. China is indeed an authoritarian one-party system, but this kind of labelling misses the bigger picture and completely ignores the national and cultural characteristics of China.

China has always been “authoritarian”. The source for political legitimacy in the imperial era was the place at the centre of the universe; the forbidden palace that is. “All under heaven” is what defines the emperors’ powers and responsibilities. Even if the country would be ruled by for example the prime minister, members of the imperial family or by various officials the emperor still holds all the symbolic power and is, in principle at least, the highest possible authority. The Socialist China and the imperial China share some intriguing similarities. In fact it’s not a very big leap of imagination to say that there is no real difference between imperial and modern China as far as the relationship between rulers and the people is concerned. The Party can be thought as an “organisational emperor” (Zheng 2010, 16).

The CCP then is not a party in the normal sense of the word. It exists both above and parallel to the state unlike parties in democratic countries where the state and the party are not institutionally linked and muscle for power amongst each other trying to promote the interests if their electorate. The CCP acts as the personification of the emperor, who under the Confucian thinking was the people, the state and everything else under the heaven. Everything that benefited the emperor would benefit the people and vice versa. Much of the same goes for the CCP.

While Party and the state (and many institutions of the state) are so joined at the hip that it is not unusual to see the term “party-state” when China is described, they are not one and the same. The link between the Party and Chinese armed forces, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) warrants a mention of its own. There is great overlap between the two, high Party officials often hold positions in the PLA and vice versa. So much so that the army is nearly an extension of the Party. Ultimately the army backs the rule of the CCP as demonstrated by the crackdown at Tiananmen.

The CCP also has another claim for the sole rule of China. Marxist parties that have risen to power by revolution or civil war can claim to represent the people as after the revolution there is only one class that the Marxist party then represents. The CCP can claim to represent the interests of all Chinese because most of the people belong to the same class. Or rather that how it used to be, the modern China
holds a multitude of classes and social strata and the CCP has to adapt and change in order to include these new groups.

By 1981 class was no longer the paramount divider in Chinese society and for a party that exists solely to promote the interests of the working class it posed severe ideological problems. The troublesome question of admitting capitalists and entrepreneurs to the Party is now largely resolved and the party base today includes capitalists as well as the more traditional workers, peasants and intellectuals. However by doing so the Party has had to forfeit socialism as it is generally understood. (Misra 1998, 13.)

3.2. Taking in the capitalists

Instead of combating business the CCP members are actively taking part in it. The Party officials publicly endorse and support the party members’ participation in the business world. The Party is keen on being able to be a part of every aspect of society in China, including business. The Party is deeply involved with the economy on all levels and connections to the Party make up a major part economic life in China. (Opper et al. 2002, 111-113.) The success of an enterprise is highly dependent on how well the entrepreneur is connected to the party-state. A new business is often started by former Party cadre members with connections to their local Party institutions (Delman 2005, 211).

Long before capitalists were officially accepted as Party members in 2002 there already were private entrepreneurs in the party ranks without officially being recognised as such (ibid. 212). At a glance it might look a bit strange for a communist Party endorsing capitalism, but given Deng Xiaoping’s ideological about-face it is less surprising. If it was “glorious to become wealthy” as Deng proposed why shouldn’t the party members as the vanguard of Chinese society take the lead? Even with Deng’s ideological backing the motivation for launching an enterprise is of course a pragmatic one.

In the urban areas the cadres could rely on party career and feed from the “iron rice bowl” (a secure job) the rural cadres had much less opportunities for that. Therefore starting a business is a good idea. Cities got their entrepreneurs from migrant rural workers who were discriminated against in the cities due to the hukou –system. Under that system a person is classified either as a rural or urban resident
and changing ones status is often extraordinary difficult. A migrant needs special permission to move from the countryside to the cities, but unofficial migrants (referred to as “floating population“) flock to the cities nevertheless. Without a permit they are left without various privileges that official urban residents have (such as housing and education). Therefore they have much to gain, but very little to lose by launching a business. As the market economy started to gain more and more legitimacy and it was no longer seen suspicious urban carders started to take part in the growing economy. (Wu 2006, 394-395.)

The relationship between the Party and the private entrepreneurs is a complicated one, where both sides seek to pursue their own interests without stepping on each other’s toes. The business people seek more economic (and political) freedom, but are immensely careful in pursuing those goals for the fear of repercussions of demanding too much too quickly. The Party on the other hand is facing a dilemma; how to contain the capitalists without sacrificing economic development. China is nowadays a corporatist state where the party-state, private enterprises and various organisations and associations (often set up by the state) are closely co-operating with one another. Close relations with the party-state are desirable because of the connections it provides. In the China a deciding factor for the success of an enterprise is how well it is able to tap into the unofficial resources of the party-state (Guiheux 2006, 231-234). Partly because of close connections between party-state and private enterprise corruption is rife in China. Businesspeople frustrated by arbitrary bureaucracy and impenetrable inter-personal networks often resort to bribery to make their lives easier (Delman 2005, 213).

3.3. Still mostly popular...

The common wisdom in the west is that China is ruthless authoritarian state that needs to resort to violence and coercion in order to maintain its power. The image of the Tiananmen massacre still shadows the discussion in the west. True, the Chinese authorities can and have used violence to quell resistance, but increasingly softer methods are being used (Brady 2009, 445). Furthermore the Chinese people as a large are quite content with the current political situation, where the Party monopolises the political power. Much of the resistance against the party-state is aimed at individual shortcomings of the political output, such as quality of life, corruption and the environment.
A major shift in the legitimising the Party rule occurred in the early nineties. The Party adopted the stance that it was no longer a “revolutionary party”, but rather a “party in power”. The main consequence was that the Party’s main method for holding power is now persuasion, not violence. Persuasion (or bluntly propaganda) by the Party uses mainly tried and tested methods of the west. Spin doctors and media managers have taken hold of China, just as they have done in the west. By being present in every media outlet from newspapers to the internet the Party is capable of blocking every unwanted message. As it is doing so it makes use of western ideas and attempts to emulate them. (Brady 2009, 449, 441.)

While the CCP still insists that it exists to represent the classes of China (increasingly all of them, including capitalists) the importance of class is in doubt. Other contradictions in the society have taken over the class and a new reason for the Party’s existence has to be found. Soon after the Tiananmen crackdown the Chinese premiere Jiang Zemin launched a campaign to promote patriotism. When class is waning in importance nationalism seems to be good substitute. Patriotism is a powerful tool; it is easier to attach yourself to a country than to an ideology. The CCP is using that to their advantage, particularly when it is up to the Party to define what is patriotic. It is not just love for the country they’re after; in the Party definition patriotism also includes love for the Party. (Guo 2004, 25-29.)

The Party made sure that the Chinese would think that without it there would be chaos. The Party is supposed to be the only force that can keep China united. This discourse is extremely effective in the Chinese context as the country has gone through many upheavals and catastrophes when the central power was weak. Humiliations suffered during the Opium War and later in the hands of the Japanese are not forgotten, nor is the chaos of the warlord era or the Cultural Revolution. “Annihilation of the Party means annihilation of the nation” became a new slogan for the Party (ibid. 32). Promoting patriotism and associating it with the Party is an example of persuasion in action. It legitimises the Party rule without need for coercion.

After the Party’s ideological crisis in the post-Mao era and launching the opening up and reform policy popular support has only increased. It would appear that the Chinese are taking a very pragmatic stance on the issue of political liberation and rights. The party-state is taking China, albeit slowly, to the direction the people want it to go. They support the states continuing emphasis on economic growth
and strengthening the nation. (Wan 1998, 370-371.) The “shared goals” explanation is only half of the story though. There is a deep apolitical undercurrent in the Chinese psyche that stems from millennia of Confucian tradition.

Confucianism is often accused of being authoritarian, as it emphasises submission to one’s superior and loyalty to parents and elders. The family is then extended as a metaphor to cover ruler-subject relations, where the people (children) would obey the rulers (parents), while the latter would in turn provide and shelter the children (Chu 2000, 44). There is a strong egalitarian tone in Confucius’ writings; a ruler should be virtuous and kind towards his subjects. He should aid and nurture them to become better men. Confucius did not write for the masses though, his teachings were meant for the junzi, a gentleman. The ruling elite were his audience. The masses were supposed to for the most part take what was coming, up to a point. There is an “a-democratic” current in the Confucian tradition though (Hu 2000, 62). Confucianism relies on virtuous ruler who must have the best interests of the people in mind. If he does not his reign is cut short by rebellious people. It is allowed to rebel against unjust ruler. In the imperial China everyone had, at least in theory, the possibility to rise as far up the ranks as possible. Even up the emperor. This points to another “a-democratic” feature in Confucianism.

Sure enough Confucius’ writings easily lend themselves to authoritarian interpretations. Confucianism as a doctrine is egalitarian and anti-despotic in nature, but when it is used as a state ideology it easily becomes authoritarian (Hu 2000, 65). Should a conflict rise between the ruled and the ruler Confucianism as a state ideology would tip the scales in favour of the ruler, in fact most rebellions against unjust rulers were carried in the name of other ideologies (ibid. 64-65). Confucian idea of submission to authority covers a good part in explaining the lack of interest for politics in Chinese society at large. Apolitical tendencies are further strengthened by psychological gap between state and society. A good part of the population has become indifferent of the party-state (Wan 1998, 372). Political rights are very low in the list of priorities for most Chinese as concern over economic rights greatly outweigh them. In a survey conducted between 1992 and 1995 only 15 percent were unhappy that they had no say in politics, but between 50 and 60 percent would be upset if the state were to confiscate their hard earned possessions (ibid. 368-369). Another survey on Chinese attitudes was conducted in 1995 for Beijing residents. That survey shows that “national peace and prosperity” was the most important value (56 %) for the responders clearly outweighing others, such as “social
equality” (10 %) and “fair administration of justice” (13 %). The choice “political democracy” gained a mere 5.8 percent support, the third lowest rank out of seven. (Dowd et al. 2000, 194.)

There is a clear link with economic development and strengthening the state. The strength of a state is often measured by its GDP or other economic meters and China clearly has some impressive figures to show. Since the reform and opening-up policy began in earnest in the 80s the Chinese GDP shows constant double-figure rise and China is once again taking its place among the leading nations of the world. Making China great power again was Deng Xiaoping’s intention when he launched the reforms and opened the way for a market economy in China. Deng was extremely wary of foreign powers exploiting China, yet again; therefore it would be imperative to develop an industrial base that could support a powerful and advanced army (Chang 1996, 385).

3.4. But the youth...

Surveys probing the Chinese students, who in the past have played an important part shaping Chinese society hold much more radical and individualist opinions, but feel that there’s very little they can actually achieve. After the Tiananmen student protests the state made an effort to curb student political activism and have succeeded in doing just that, leaving many university students feeling apathetic about politics. Opposition to the Party rule just before Tiananmen was running high, western ideas and individualism were held in high regard among the students. After Tiananmen protests were culled with much bloodshed the students’ attitudes didn’t change, but they rejected grassroots action as a viable medium for social change and turned their attention to economic growth and liberalisation as a way forward. Economy is now the main way for students to express themselves, as it is the sector least governed by the Party and it offers the most individual freedom, the so called “golden road” (business and enterprise) has become the most popular plan for the future among students over “black road” (academic career) and the “red road” (career in the Party). (Chan 2000, 208-210, 216, 221.)

The youth have learned to be pragmatic and not discuss politics directly focusing on other aspects of life or going overseas to seek a better life. Even if the students are apathetic about politics the number of students joining the Party is increasing. It is not because they would be politically motivated, but because joining the Party is a good career move in their minds (ibid. 223). Their political opinions
haven’t changed and they are still very much against the Party rule, support democracy and many western values. The political road for democracy has been blocked by the Party while a new economic road has opened up in its place. Before the 1990s there was very little in the way of economy for the students, but very lot in the way of politics. After the 90s the opposite holds true. (ibid. 227.)

3.5 The shape of things to come

Ever since the reform and opening up-policy started some China scholars have predicted the fall of the CCP to occur soon. Particularly after the Tiananmen ‘incident’ there was great deal of talk about the loss of legitimacy for the Party rule. China in the minds of many scholars was heading the same way as other east-bloc countries. Now four decades after the beginning of reform and twenty years after Tiananmen the Party and China seem to do better than ever. Ironically the very success of the Party seems to pose the biggest risk to its survival.

Economic development is at the very heart of the Party’s politics and economic questions rank high for the people in general. China is now home for some of the world’s super-rich. Major cities in China have both extravagant luxury and absolute poverty, such glaring inequality hasn’t gone unnoticed. For the time being the Chinese people and their leaders rather turn a blind eye to the problem and continue the economic policy that so far has lead to vast income disparity. Furthermore the growing business elite may begin to voice its opposition and demand more political power and freedom.

So far the Party has been extremely successful in reforming and maintaining its position as the sole political power in China. The Chinese Communist Party has defied the expectations of many scholars critical of the CCP and survived. It is certain that the rulers in Beijing will face grave problems and difficulties in the coming years and it is more than likely that they will overcome those troubles in one way or another.
4. The question at hand: material, research problem and methods

4.1. Research material

The National Congress (NC) is theoretically the highest decision making organ in the Party. Much of the actual work is done during plenary sessions, however that said the NC still carries enormous significance as it is much more public affair than the plenary sessions. The speeches are disseminated both in China and abroad for subtle clues as where the Party’s line will steer during the next five years. The purpose of this thesis is to map the development of Chinese socialism using speeches (or ‘reports’) given to the National Congress of the Communist Party of China. How do the theoretical changes sketched out in previous chapters show in the speeches given and what relation do they have to the changes in the society?

The material collected for the thesis comprises of six speeches chosen mostly because they are available in English or any language for that matter. Fortunately the material covers some of the more interesting periods of the history of the Party, also the material lends itself to be neatly divided into three distinct groups with two speeches each. Firstly there are two speeches (chapter five: ‘Revolution’) from the turbulent times of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four era; what one could call the era of upheaval. After that the next set is from the time of Deng Xiaoping’s rise to power (chapter six: ‘the final rise of Deng Xiaoping’), one where his position is still precarious and one where he has significant sway over the course of the CCP policies. Finally the last set is made of the last two speeches given (Chapter seven: Party in power), leaving a substantial gap in the material. The three decades in between are the years of Dengian reform and largely dominated by his leadership. The material, while not ideally so, makes a fairly consistent source. The position of the speaker and the general setting are for the relevant parts the same throughout the material.

The first speech is a political report given by Lin Biao to the ninth congress in 1969. It is set during the time when Biao was at the height of his power and the country in turmoil. It represents Biao’s interpretation of Maoism. The second one is a report given to the tenth national congress by Zhou Enlai in 1973. The Cultural Revolution is winding down, Lin Biao has died and discredited; while the Gang
The historical setting for the first set is a dramatic one, arguably a low point in the history of the People’s Republic of China.

The final two reports leap in time all the way to the 21st century and to a very different country. China no longer needs to search its place among the nations, as it is now firmly set to become a great power. There is no clear and great difference between the report to the 16th congress by Jiang Zemin in 2002 and the one given to the 17th by Hu Jintao five years later in overall tone and the historical situation. Both represent the modern China with the odd mixture of Chinese idiosyncrasies and western catchphrases.

In between the two there is the odd one out. In the Chinese nomenclature the previous speeches are referred as to ‘reports’, but the material concerning Deng Xiaoping is made up from an opening and a closing address to the congress. The difference is clear, but not insurmountable and must be kept in mind while analysing the material. Historically the 11th and the 12th congresses are in a turning point in the Chinese history. While the 11th is still in the Maoist China the next one is already setting the new China led by Deng. Even with the most cursory reading it is exceptionally clear how much has changed during the few years that separate Zhou’s address from Deng’s, while Deng’s personality surely made a difference the change in the Chinese society is also overwhelming.

4.2. Research Problem

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China the ruling communist party has continually adapted to the changes in the society. Meanwhile changes in the Party’s line have a profound impact on the society in China. The relationship between the Party and the society is a complex one, but it is clearly a reflexive one. As China continues to grow in importance in economy and politics the need to understand China also grows in accordance. If the changes in Party line and the society are linked then by analysing the Party line one should be able to explore the changes in the Chinese society.

China is a hot topic in political science and the volume of research is overwhelming, to the point where the field is almost crowded. It however underlines the importance of the topic, both within China and abroad. China is bound to play ever increasing role in the world. It is already challenging other Asian
nations, such as Japan, and is making it’s presence felt in Africa. In due time China will perhaps overtake the EU and even the US in terms of economy and political power. Whatever the timetable may be China will play a major role in the future and what it’s impact will be depends largely on how it’s society will evolve. Using the reports and the speeches I hope to add my stake to the wealth of material concerning China.

The question at hand is: What sort of a society is the speaker constructing? How do you answer a question like that? One way of dealing with the question is to analyse and identify the core discourse of the Party’s ideology. The image of the society is built using the ideological framework that the Party is following at any given time. The actual question thus becomes: What is the dominant discourse of the speech? Answering to that question will then unlock, at least in part, the somewhat perplexing China.

Additionally the question is about change. How has the discourse changed over time and over various ideological changes that have occurred. China today is very different from what it was just two decades ago, let alone half a century. Mapping the changes in discourse will provide important clues in determining why this discourse succeeded over another

Of particular the interest is also what is the justification of the Party rule, a question that is invariably linked with the first one. By analysing the discourses prevalent in the material it should be possible to determine the prime justification for the continuing one-party rule.

Finally some kind of prediction of the future discourses is possible. Looking back, can you tell where China is going tomorrow? The Chinese themselves are exceptionally keen on predicting the future from the past, for the Chinese as a culture do not forget.

All in all there are three major questions: (1) What is the discourse of the speech that the speakers are constructing, (2) what is the justification for power of the Party that the speakers make and finally (3) how have the discourses and justifications changed over time. The final point about the future is obviously more speculative in nature, but nevertheless important one. It should be thought as an addition to the three questions above, however.
4.3. Method: Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is not really a research method in its own right, but a broad line of approach. Discourse analysis is concerned with language and its use. Specifically how language is used to construct and re-enforce reality, that is to say that discourse analysis adheres to the idea of social constructivism. Discourse analysis makes a number of theoretical assumptions on language, reality and the actors involved. Firstly it supposes that reality is socially constructed and secondly that there are many different interpretations of reality leading to many competing discourses. Other presuppositions are that all meaningful action takes place within a certain context, that actors attach themselves to a particular discourse and finally that the use of language always carries consequences. Which one of the five points above becomes important depends on the problem at hand. (Jokinen et al. 1993, 17-18.)

Choosing which points to emphasise will affect what questions are interesting and likewise chosen points of interest will make some aspects of discourse analysis more interesting and useful. It is up to the researcher to choose the emphasis for his research project. This of course raises the problem of the role of the researcher. A degree of self-reflection is necessary for any researcher, but for someone using a method like discourse analysis the need to be aware of the choices made becomes ever greater. When the task is to apply discourse analysis to the speeches given by the leading members of the Chinese Communist Party putting those five points of discourse analysis to practice will, quite obviously, yield different results.

The word ‘discourse’ in the thesis is used in the meaning of ‘dominant way speaking’, what kinds of words and expressions are used is the point of interest. The language used reflects the society and “constructs” the reality. In other words the emphasis is firmly on the first point from above.

I intend to use Kenneth J. Gergen’s ideas on discourse analysis as the theoretical framework for my thesis. His theoretical approach sums nicely to five points: Firstly the nature of descriptions is arbitrary (meaning that there is no connection between words and the object of description), secondly the interpretation of descriptions is a cultural product, thirdly how well descriptions are re-enforced doesn’t depend on their relation to any objective truth but rather their degree of usefulness, fourthly
descriptions gain a meaning through action (that is to say in some context) and finally to evaluate descriptions is to evaluate the culture that has produced them. (Jokinen et al. 2002, 176-177.)

Applying the five points of Gergen to the work at hand might come out something like this. Descriptions are not fixed and they are subject to change and interpretation. The Chinese culture would interpret the descriptions differently from the western one. What kinds of descriptions are useful in the Chinese context? How does the fact that the actor is the CCP leadership affect the intended reading of the description? Finally what can be said about China under the CCP leadership based on the descriptions in the material to be analysed?

Ultimately everything boils down to just one, even if quite self evident, point: the Chinese culture is different from the western one, therefore the use of language is also different. Take for example the term ‘democratic dictatorship’, that in the western usage of the words is an oxymoron if there ever is one. The common understandings of the words are diametrically opposed to one another, even if one can lambast democracy as “dictatorship of the masses”. In the Chinese context ‘dictatorship’ is usually understood as the use of force in implementing the policies decided. Democracy on the other hand should be understood, not as a form of government or as a method for decision making, but rather as unity or equality. Of course it should be seen also through the Marxist point of view, where the members of the working class have the power and share common interests.

Finally it should be noted that the material is in English, and even though they are (barring one) all official translations of the original Chinese some nuances may be lost in translation. In the following chapters the material is analysed and compared first within every set and then the differences between the sets are discussed. Finally the conclusions can be drawn and all the questions answered in full.
5. Revolution

5.1. Lin Biao and the Cultural Revolution

By 1969 the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was already winding down and Lin Biao had risen to prominence. On April 1, 1969 he gave the report to the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China, only the second after the founding of the People’s Republic some twenty years earlier. When Biao gave his report to the Congress he was undoubtedly the number two in the Party, right after Chairman Mao himself, and was the most dedicated disciple of Mao. During the Sino-Japanese war and later the Chinese civil war Biao proved himself to be an extraordinarily capable leader. After the war he was made the head of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and held other major and influential positions in relation to the military.

Mao’s reasons for launching the Cultural Revolution are still subject to debate, but it is easy to see it as his way of diverting attention from the dismal failures of his previous policies, such as the Great Leap Forward. In accordance with the principle of continuous revolution the bourgeoisie counter-revolutionary elements are to blame. There were bound to be traitors in the party and they were to be exposed and swiftly punished. Meanwhile the Red Guard youth took the doctrine to the streets and hunted “rightists”, real or imaginary, with almost religious zeal. Discord in the Party as well as in the society at large strengthened Lin Biao’s position because with all the chaos and confusion the only relatively calm place was the military, and that was well and truly in Biao’s control. Biao is then speaking from a position of authority and with absolute confidence.

The main focus of his report is the promotion of the Cultural revolution and further glorify the apparent victories won over bourgeoisie and “capitalist roadsters” forces within the Party, notably that of over Liu Shaoqi. Biao offers an ideological account for the necessity of Cultural Revolution and chronicles the struggle against the said capitalist roadsters. Finally he outlines the revolutionary struggle abroad and gives his analysis on the political situation during that phase of the cold war from a Maoist point of view.
Biao’s report is aggressive in tone and uses very harsh language. It is reminiscent of the language used in George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four to vilify Emmanuel Goldstein\(^1\); here Liu Shaoqi takes the place of Goldstein. Lin Biao starts his report with the ritualistic greeting “comrades!” before giving an overview of the circumstances during which the congress is held. Notably he wastes no time before launching his attack on Liu Shaoqi, in fact Liu is labelled “a hidden traitor and a scab” (an insult that repeats a number of times through the report) in the third sentence of the report. Throughout the report Lin Biao uses words such as “crush” and “smash” while referring to the purging of Liu Shaoqi and his clique, as if he’s stomping on a bug.

Mao emphasised the class struggle and the need for continuous revolution, which of course needs enemies. Here Biao is reinforcing the *discourse of revolution* and continuing class struggle.

Marxist parties stake their claim in power to their triumph over the bourgeoisie. The class struggle is over and the members of the remaining class, the proletariat, all share the same interests. The classic way of achieving the victory for the proletariat is through revolution. The idea of revolution as means to social change is then deeply rooted to the Marxist ideological constructs and Mao, apparently, took the idea to the letter. The word revolution implies sudden and violent change in the state of affairs, but the communists in China came to power only after a long and protracted fight against the KMT which was anything but quick and overwhelming. The fact that Mao largely formulated his theories during the fight with the KMT undoubtedly had an impact to how he came to see the Marxist ideas.

Theoretically Maoism encourages conversation and debate, but in practice any criticism was met with fierce resistance and was quickly silenced. In particular during the Cultural Revolution criticism became downright dangerous. Biao keeps true to Maoism and does not even attempt to bring about any original ideas, becoming almost parrot-like in his report in respect to the ideological content of it. Just as in Nineteen Eighty-Four independent thought is potentially dangerous and should be nipped at the bud Biao’s report does not condone any deviation from the official line.

\(^1\) In George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four Emmanuel Goldstein is apparently a figment of Big Brother’s imagination (who is also most likely fictional), created for the sole purpose for being a scapegoat for the party’s shortcomings and to pose as the enemy within that is used to justify the coercive policies of the party. (Orwell 2003, 307.)
In contrast to the sinister picture of Shaoqi Lin Biao paints a rosy portrait of Mao. The credit for exposing Shaoqi’s betrayal is given to Mao personally as a proof of his ability to insight, his intelligence and his innate qualities as a great leader. In Biao’s words Mao was “[…] the first to perceive the danger of the counter-revolutionary plots of Liu Shao-chi [today rendered as Shaoqi] and his gang.”

This is but one example on how Biao builds the Mao image. At times it appears as if Lin Biao is attempting to brand Mao as a sage-king by using phrases as: “Chairman Mao teaches us” (no less than four times), “wise leadership of Chairman Mao” (three times), and “Chairman Mao has taught us”. Ironically a sage-king is an ideal Confucian leader, and Confucius was subject to harsh criticism during the Cultural Revolution (Zhang-Swartz 1997, 198).

In accordance to the note before, all of Mao’s notes are portrayed as being logical and strictly based on scientific principles. The Mao that Lin Biao is describing is calm and scientific. Liu Shaoqi on the other hand “preaches” his position, he “raves” angrily and behaves illogically. His views are dismissed as “fallacies”, that do not need to be addressed in depth:

”He raved that whoever refused to carry out his line was "not qualified to hold a leading post." ”

”Moreover, Liu Shao-chi went on spreading such reactionary fallacies […]”

”Countering the fallacy put forward by Liu Shao-chi in 1956 that "in China, the question of which wins out, socialism or capitalism, is already solved". Chairman Mao specifically pointed out: "The question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is still not really settled." ” [emphasis in original]

“He denounced Liu Shao-chi’s bourgeois reactionary line which was "Left" in form but Right in essence and repudiated Liu Shao-chi's absurdities […]”

“Liu Shao-chi came up with his sinister book Self-Cultivation. ” [emphasis added]

Merely by labelling his claims as such is enough for Lin Biao to refute them. Biao extensively quotes Mao, sometimes in length. In all he quotes Mao no less than 47 times in his report. Most of the quotes he takes from the “Quotations from Chairman Mao” (or colloquially the little red book), which he of
course, edited himself. Nevertheless his absolute insistence on following the teachings of Mao is evident. You could see him quoting Mao as an ideological crutch, a way for a man without any original input to make a point. However more likely explanation would be him propping up the personality cult built around Mao. He conveys the word of the Chairman to his audience as a reaffirmation of the teachings of Mao.

It’s equally important to note that in quoting Mao, as much as he does, Lin Biao underlines the absoluteness of the ideological hegemony of Mao Zedong Thought. By turning to Mao in every turn he makes it perfectly clear that there are no alternatives to the literal following of Mao’s teachings. The passage: “We must closely follow Chairman Mao and steadfastly rely on the broad revolutionary masses [...]” conveys the point that Lin Biao is pushing. Little after that he further insists that: “Departing from the leadership of Chairman Mao and Mao Zedong Thought our Party will suffer setbacks and defeats”, Lin Biao makes this out as a fact.

According to him that is the historical truth and the experiences and lessons of history have proven it so. This is exactly the same reasoning that Deng Xiaoping uses later to justify the dictatorship of the Party; any other line than the official Party line will lead to chaos and confusion. The cruel irony is of course that while Lin Biao considers the Cultural Revolution as the glorious highpoint in the history of the Party and China, Deng has the exact opposite view.

Mao, according to Lin Biao, benevolently gives Liu Shaoqi the opportunity to retract his counter-revolutionary ways. Liu however is unrepentant and ultimately the traitor cannot be tolerated any more. Mao in words at least, if not in deeds, promotes what is Lin terms as “struggle-criticism-transformation” –model (unity-criticism-unity in Mao) of thought where an individual who has strayed from the correct path can be re-integrated to the Party if he clearly and unambiguously acknowledges his mistakes. (Mao 1967, 142.)

”We must implement Chairman Mao's policies of "leniency towards those who confess their crimes and severe punishment of those who refuse to do so" ” [emphasis in original]

Since Liu Shaoqi is unrepentant and continues his bourgeoisie ways he must be punished. Even if Liu Shaoqi could no longer pose a threat it was still necessary to eradicate the public opinion that he and
his associates had seeded in various places, thus the need for the Cultural Revolution. Biao makes it clear that the Shaoqi clique of “renegades” has been smashed, but he also stresses on the need to remain vigilant as according to Mao the struggle against counter-revolutionary renegades is continuous and never ending.

Maoism is as much a military doctrine as it is a political one. It grew out of the needs of war and only awkwardly fits as a model to rule a country. To fully implement Maoism one needs to have an enemy. The Maoist doctrine supposes that the enemies are always present and willing to overthrow the socialist system. Biao’s report reads as much as a military report as it does as a political one.

Hence Lin Biao needs to make a case for perpetual war of sorts. By constantly referring to Liu Shaoqi and his gang (or alternatively his clique) “hiding themselves among the masses” he creates an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, not unlike that seen in Nineteen Eighty-four (or the war on terror for that matter), where potential enemies are everywhere. Since Liu Shaoqi’s crime is the supposed attempt to bring back the ruling bourgeoisie class and overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat his betrayal is ideological in nature. Ideological purity thus becomes a focal point in identifying the reactionary elements that still may loom in the shadows.

Lin Biao focuses mainly on three topics in his report. Firstly that Liu Shaoqi is a traitor and that he’s a traitor because he wishes to return to bourgeoisie dictatorship. Secondly that while Shaoqi has been dealt with the revolution must continue or other revisionist forces will rise leading to the downfall of the Chinese people. Finally he stresses on the importance of following Mao Zedeong Thought in continuing that revolution.

Of those three points the two last ones are important, Liu Shaoqi is merely a warning example that will underline the importance of the other points. Lin Biao also addresses the Sino-Soviet split that occurred over the same time as his report. There he equates Khrushchev and the Kremlin under him to Liu Shaoqi, i.e. as a revisionist force trying to turn back the socialist revolution and bring back capitalism.

The question we must now pose is: what is the dominant discourse in the society that Lin Biao is constructing? The answer is obvious: Mao Zedong Thought. Maoism in the guise of the continuing
revolution permeated through the entire society and it practically seeps out of Lin Biaos’s report. Even tough to an outside observer (or even to some Chinese ones) it was blatantly obvious that there was something horribly wrong with the situation in China during the Cultural Revolution Lin Biao sees it as a glorious example of Mao Zedong Thought in action.

While Mao was initially the ideologically unorthodox one in the Party and promoted the very practically minded approach of waging guerrilla warfare from the rural areas as opposed to city-oriented conventional war that Moscow’s advisors pushed for. Ultimately Mao’s approach was the correct one; the units fighting along with Mao’s doctrine were successful while those that openly fought the KMT or the Japanese were destroyed. After the victory however Mao’s teachings became increasingly out of place with disastrous results.

Early Mao initiatives like the Great Leap Forward and the Great Swallow campaign\(^2\) (also known as the Four Pests) cost up to tens of millions of lives, yet it apparently didn’t even occur to Mao to think that he might be wrong and his disciples were no different. Likewise the Cultural Revolution is considered as another dismal failure of Mao’s, but at the time people like Lin Biao considered it as the pinnacle of socialist theory and practice. The youth running amok in the name of Mao Zedong probably agreed.

It turned out that the only way to be safe during the Cultural Revolution was to criticize someone and to strictly adhere to Mao Zedong Thought in thought and deed, lest you become like that of Liu Shaoqi.

5.2. Zhou Enlai and the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution

The cult of personality that Lin Biao was building around Mao was beginning to irk even Mao himself and when Lin Biao saw the power slipping away from him he took action. His apparent coup attempt failed however and Biao’s life ended in 1971 in the plains of Mongolia when his plane crashed

\(^2\) The Great Swallow Campaign was an agricultural policy initiated by Mao in 1958. It was noted that swallows ate some of seeds being planted supposedly causing crop loss so a campaign to eradicate the swallows was launched. However the swallows ate mostly insects and without the swallows eating locusts and such their number exploded causing crop losses that dwarfed the ones caused by swallows.
allegedly en route to Moscow. The betrayal and death of Mao’s heir apparent left an opening at the top. Jostling for the position to succeed Mao were Zhou Enlai as one of the top runners. Zhou was liked and respected by the cadres and trusted by the already ailing Mao. Throughout the Cultural Revolution he was a moderating force who tried to restore calm. On the other side was the Gang of Four, led by Mao’s wife Jiang Qing, who did their best to politically attack Zhou.

With Lin Biao still in the back of everyone’s mind and a campaign to criticize him underway Zhou Enlai addressed the Tenth National Congress of the Party in August 1973. The main focus in Zhou’s report is Lin Biao, and unsurprisingly to criticize him. Lin Biao in fact gets the exactly same treatment as Liu Shaoqi did four years earlier. Approximately half of Zhou’s report goes to criticising Lin Biao and laying down the correct socialist path. While Lin Biao is the main issue a sizeable part of his report also deals with China’s position in the world politics by criticising the “imperialist powers” of the United States and the “revisionist” Soviet Union.

Zhou Enlai needs to make it clear that Lin Biao was a traitor and to make the nature of his crime known. He also has to defend the Cultural Revolution while accusing Biao. If Lin Biao was a ‘true’ Maoist how can he be criticized for his belief while still upholding the Mao Zedong Thought? Zhou employs the same strategy as Biao himself; he rewrites history. It turns out that Lin Biao’s devotion to Mao was merely a ruse, if you believe his critics. In reality, according to Zhou, he was a “rightist” himself and was actively trying to undermine the Party power and unity.

Where Liu Shaoqi attempted to bring back a “bourgeoisie” model of economy, Lin Biao’s wrongdoing is more profound in nature. He, according to Zhou, had set as his goal on establishing a bourgeoisie mode of government, and thus turn back the tide of history. The Party had finally freed the Chinese people through a mass campaign and Lin Biao was trying to undo that, by attempting to seize power. Here too the discourse is revolution, but the enemy has changed. Zhou’s account is far less ‘religious’ in its content, but still he sings praises to Mao. Though nothing like what Lin Biao did.

At a glance Zhou’s report is very similar to Biao’s, as it follows the same format as the one before. The smashing of the “Lin Biao anti-Party clique” makes it to the very top of the agenda. Both reports begin with a declaration of victory over an enemy that has infiltrated the Party from the inside. However
where Biao only makes his account on traitors and enemies crushed, and glorifying the great victory under Mao Zhou Enlai’s account is also a call for unity. After all Lin Biao is accused of being a “a capitalist-roadster in power working only for the interests of the few”, that is to say that he only worked to further his own power.

Zhou’s message regarding Lin Biao is threefold, firstly his crimes have been exposed and his clique dealt with. Secondly there will be more Lin Biaos and the like to come and the Party members must remain vigilant and study Mao Zedong Thought in order to remain on the correct path. Finally the Party gains its strength only through unity and reliance on the masses, which is exactly the principle that Lin Biao violated.

Maoism is fundamentally a mass movement with mass participation. Everything has to be done with the greater good in mind. Zhou Enlai remarks that, the past experience has taught to “rely on the masses” and that the Party members should devote themselves to “the well-being of the masses”. The masses are the model for a good socialist and a source of inspiration. Or in Zhou’s words:

“[put] proletarian politics in command, vigorously launch mass movements and give full scope to the enthusiasm, wisdom and creativeness of the masses”.

However he also makes it clear that the Party is what should be in command and with the principle of democratic centralism and by following correct line laid my Mao the Party members on all levels should work for the common good.

What Lin Biao did was nothing short of betrayal of the principles that Zhou laid out. He makes it appear that Lin Biao in fact managed to hijack the masses for his own ends. Zhou notes that: “the struggle against Lui Shaoqi’s revisionism covered Lin Biao’s revisionism”, that is to say that in their haste to criticise Liu Shaoqi the Party and the masses alike fell for the deception of Lin Biao. But something good emerged from the crimes of Lin Biao, the masses have now been taught a lesson and together with, and the under the guidance of, the Party they can now criticise Lin Biao and learn from that experience.
With this new opportunity they have the chance to learn correct Marxism-Leninism and the Mao Zedong Thought. Zhou proposes that through the criticism of Lin Biao the Party and the masses as a whole have become more vigorous and united. Instead of stemming the “rolling torrent of Chinese people’s revolution” Lin Biao in fact according to Zhou “further aroused the whole Party, the Army and people to ‘unite to win still greater victories’”.

Where Lin Biao quoted Mao in excess Zhou Enlai uses quotes by him in much more in moderation, he uses them to make a point that he then elaborates on. Lin Biao ritualistically quotes Mao, but does not carry the reasoning any further. Zhou stresses the need to know the correct teachings of Mao, but also to understand them. Zhou comments on Lin Biao and his followers:

“[people who] never showed up without a copy of Quotations in hand never opened their mouths without shouting ‘long live!’”

“[…] when a tide came, the majority went along with it, while only a few understood it.”

They are then merely following the tide without stopping to think what they are doing. This according to Zhou goes against the very core of Marxism-Leninism, a deviation that is serious, but redeemable for a cadre member. In Biao’s case he is instigator of the erroneous tide and clearly knew what he was doing, therefore his crime is irredeemable.

Biao’s approach to true socialism was to have the people learn the Quotations more or less by heart. He canonised the selected texts and by doing so he vulgarised Mao’s teachings. It was very simplified Maoism, that could be used to incite the masses. This is seen as sham Marxism by Biao’s critics. He does not offer any deeper understanding of Mao’s teachings. Zhou on the other had in his report, while still quoting Mao, explains some of the deeper theoretical aspects of Mao. In Biao’s report the revolution (or class struggle) is seen exclusively as just that, as an attempt to bring back capitalism. Zhou speaks of a “two line struggle” within the Party, in other words contradictions.

”And there will still be two-line struggles reflecting these contradictions, i.e., struggles between the advanced and the backward and between the correct and the erroneous.”
The contradictions he speaks of are for example that of between advanced and backward, correct and erroneous and between the socialist road and the capitalist road. Furthermore the contradictions within the Party are reflections of the contradictions in the society at large. According to Maoism contradictions between people always exist, and because of that the revolution has to be continued. The contradictions in society and in the Party will then produce more Lin Biaos and more Liu Shaoquis:

"Lin Piaos will appear again and so will persons like Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi, Peng Teh-huai and Kao Kang. This is something independent of man’s will.”

The key lesson that the Lin Biao debacle taught to the Party and the people is according to Zhou that the “masses can draw from historical experience”. With Lin Biao the people can learn to identify ‘sham socialism’ when they see it.

5.3. Analysis

5.3.1. The Discourse of Revolution

Revolution is ultimately a struggle between classes and class struggle stems from contradictions between people. This is because in Maoist thinking everything pins down to contradictions between people and between classes. The name given to the discourse in these two reports could have been class struggle, or even contradiction, but given the Maoist emphasis on revolution the term revolution more accurately describes the discourse.

The historical period in China between mid 1950’s to the death of Mao in 1976 is marked by conflicts (or contradictions) in the society. After the basic transfer of ownership and production to socialist system had been achieved in 1956 (Chi Hsin 1978, 34) the task of further developing the country could begin. The methods of achieving the development, as well as the desired direction of development were the key problem at the time. Essentially there were two differing lines, the socialist line and the bourgeoisie line. The socialist line emphasised further collectivisation of agriculture and development of heavy industry. Whereas the bourgeoisie line aimed, at first, to return the land back to the peasants and then to encourage economical growth in order to strengthen the nation.
The socialist line, under Mao, of course saw the need to develop the economy, but it was to be done in the strict accordance to the socialist mode of production. Any retreat from that principle surmounts to revisionism. The bourgeoisie line on the other hand stressed the need to be practical and saw no collision between their actions and socialism. This is one example what Zhou Enlai called the two-line struggle. Ultimately this contradiction would be solved it favor of the bourgeoisie line in the 90’s (and led to the phenomenal rise in the Chinese economy), but in 1969 and 1973 the socialist line was, due the continuing presence of Mao, well ahead.

Liu Shaoqi was accused of being a capitalist roadster, but his failing was to consider the transfer to the socialist system as the final victory in the class struggle and that it marked the end of the revolution; all that remained was to further develop the productive forces. Mao disagreed and concluded that there was still a contradiction in the society. The contradiction was in the possible ways a society could develop from there on, either it was going to follow the socialist path or revert back to the bourgeoisie one. Therefore there was to be no end to revolution. (Chi Hsin 1978, 35.)

Firstly Liu Shaoqi is ‘bourgeoisie’ because he is against the continuing revolution and therefore against Mao. Secondly he is bourgeoisie because he focuses on economic outlook on development at the expense of the class struggle, a point that is unmistakably in accordance with the first one. Finally Liu Shaoqi emphasises the need for experts and administrators over political figures in low-level decision making, which from another point of view can be seen as an attempt to create a new middle class. Workers, peasants and Party cadres all make up the proletariat, but intellectuals and bureaucrats do not as they are not part of the productive force.

The difference between the policies promoted by Mao and those pushed for by Liu are not diametrically opposed. The interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in turn are. Liu is bourgeoisie only in the sense that he is not in unison with Mao, he in fact is still a communist. As it is pointed out before Maoism tends to reduce political questions to simple dichotomies, such as socialist road and the capitalist road. So when Lin Biao labels Liu Shaoqi as “bourgeoisie” or “a capitalist roadster” he means to say that Liu is merely in disagreement with Maoist line.
The same applies to Lin Biao himself. Zhou Enlai brands him also “bourgeoisie”, but wasn’t Lin Biao the Maoist? By calling him a “sham Marxist” Zhou dodges the question. Lin Biao, if the course of events was as depicted, did betray the Party and the masses by attempting to stage a coup. Lin Biao only becomes a bourgeoisie if one takes this to mean his ambition for personal power. In every other sense he can be counted as a Maoist.

Both of the cases illustrate how Maoist line of thought tends to oversimplify the differences in political opinion. Things are seen in either-or -terms, either you are with us or you are against us. This sort of thinking is prevalent in times of conflict, war and crisis, but it also encourages to think in terms of conflict. While Zhou makes a call for unity it is the officially sanctioned line, ideology and the policies that everyone must adhere to in order to achieve that unity. The official Party line is the correct way and any deviation from that line is potentially revisionist.

Also everything must be seen in terms of class struggle, even the Lin Biao debacle. His aspiration for more power is not seen as a trait of his own character, but as a trait of the class he supposedly represents.

### 5.3.2. The Justification of the Party rule

There is a difference in the justification for the rule of the Party between Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai. While both speak of revolution and class struggle, traitors and the bourgeoisie, and their glorious leader Mao, they place different weight on them. In the two reports two different justifications can be found.

Lin Biao in his part invokes the charismatic leader argument. Mao Zedong has the personal qualities for leadership. Revolution is important to him as well, but it is only under the personal guidance of Mao that it is possible to begin with. Lin Biao counts the success of the Cultural Revolution and the victories over the Kuomintang and the Japanese as personal achievements of Mao. The masses that carried out the victories on the ground do so thanks to Mao’s leadership. The great German sociologist Max Weber identified three forms of legitimate authority; legal, traditional and charismatic (Merquior 1980, 98). Mao is almost the archetypical case for a charismatic leader in the Weberian sense.
The view that Lin Biao is grounding the CCP’s rule on Mao is supported by one paramount point above all. He is actively building a cult of personality around Mao. Lin Biao promotes the Mao cult firstly by quoting him endlessly and by doing so he makes it seem like Mao is in possession of the ultimate truth, which does not encourage any critical thinking. Secondly he attributes Mao with a number of flattering qualities, Lin praises Mao to no end and finally he portrays the success of the revolution as the personal achievement of Mao.

Zhou Enlai takes on a different point of view. He too has to make Mao look good and promote the success of the revolution, but in his account a different justification rises. For Zhou Enlai the justification is that the Party is the only thing that can stop the new Liu Shaoqis and the Lin Biaos. In particular he uses the negative lessons learned from the Lin Biao incident to emphasise the Party’s position as a shield against revisionist forces.

Here Zhou doesn’t merely mean that he is an enemy of the revolution, in other words bourgeoisie, but an enemy of the nation, the Party and above all an enemy of the people.

6. The (final) rise of Deng Xiaoping

6.1. We Must Renew

Deng Xiaoping made his third, and final, ascent to the top in 1977 after his political opponent, the Gang of Four, had fallen. Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong had died the year before and a relative unknown, but hand-picked by Mao, Hua Guofeng was at the top post. The Party was again at a crossroads, just as it was in 1956 after the completion of the transfer to a socialist mode of production. Now the force that had carried the Party for decades was gone, the painful lessons had been learned in the recent history and an uncertain future laid ahead.

Hua, being the leader of the Party, would make a seemingly obvious pick from the 11th Congress to analyse. Hua gave a very fiery Maoist report to the Congress in which he denounced the Gang of Four (Baum 1994, 49). This Maoist coloured witch-hunt has already been dealt with by analysing Lin Biao
and Zhou Enlai. So the next natural choice is Deng, who is at an interesting crossroads between Maoism and his own ideological aspirations.

The recently rehabilitated Deng gave the closing address to the 11th Congress in August of 1977. It marked the final vindication of his ascension to the top, however Hua Guofeng is still the Chairman of the CCP and he wields considerable power. Deng also has substantial political leverage through the numerous personal contacts and his reputation as a veteran of the democratic revolution (the war against the KMT) as well as his widely recognised administrative abilities.

The two speeches by Deng are a closing and an opening address to the congress. Whereas the reports are an official account on the state of the Party and the policies and ideals it stands for, the speeches by Deng seemingly carry more ceremonial purpose. The speeches are more clearly directed at the delegates than the reports, which are more meant for the entire Party and others outside the Party and even outside China. The most notable difference between Deng’s speeches and the four reports is the length, as Deng’s first account is barely three pages and his second is only four pages long. It stands in stark contrast for example with Lin’s twenty-one or Hu Jintao’s forty-page report.

In his speech Deng makes a number of references to Mao, but does not quote him. Nor does he dwell on any ideological details or launch attacks on the Gang of Four. Instead he uses the time well to lay down his own position on where the Party’s line ought to move; firstly to follow the late chairman’s line proletarian line. However, and this is his second point, the line must be renewed in order to fit a new period in the socialist revolution. Thirdly he makes repeated calls for unity, which is more than understandable given the Lin Biao and the Gang of Four incidences as well as the still ongoing power struggle between him and Hua Guofeng.

His speech is not inflammatory or vehement, but calm and composed. To begin with his address begins with the greeting “Comrades,” as opposed to Lin’s and Zhou Enlai’s “Comrades!”, in fact in his speech only has one exclamation mark and even then he’s praising the masses and the ranks of the Party, not the leadership. He does not praise Mao and his only nod, “the wise leader comrade Hua”, at the sitting chairman is most readily understood as Deng merely being polite. The leader is no longer raised to the level of a demigod, nor are the enemies drowned in a torrent of verbal abuse.
Deng makes a call for “less empty talk and more hard work” in his address. It appears in other speeches by Deng given during the course of his career and is interpreted as a call to avoid ‘ideological entanglement’ (Chang 1988, 28). This along with the “seek truth from the facts” doctrine that also appears in the address are central in understanding Deng’s speech. Deng the pragmatist, as the often used moniker goes, clearly shows in his address.

The discourse here then is pragmatism, he’s not overly concerned with ideological issues, but the need to reform and to strengthen the economy. However the reform and economic growth are still rooted in the notion of revolution, but he is using Mao as a springboard to promote his own policies. Deng is not working for the ideology, the ideology works for him.

Deng calls for the “renewal” of the working practices of the Party four times. Each time he’s using Mao as a starting point to lead the audience to his position. He puts great emphasis on the masses and makes it clear that the interests of the masses are the most important ones to the Party and the country. The interests are best served by being pragmatic and by dwelling on ideological matters or to “oppose empty show” as he puts it. He calls for “integrating the theory closely with practice” and to be “honest - both in word and deed”.

Deng suggests then that the ideological and theoretical approaches have been correct, but their implementation has been marred by too strict adherence to “empty show”, or ideological squabbling. He insists that: “We must not, for a moment, divorce ourselves from the masses. “ This can be taken to mean Lin Biao, the Gang of Four, or even Mao himself, although only the Gang of Four is explicitly named. That is they all, especially the Gang, did not have the best interests of the masses in mind during the course of their activities.

Throughout Deng’s attempts at justifying the transition to market economy by ideological means he is faced with the problem of having to deal with Mao. He obviously cannot explicitly call for market economy, but given the future course of the Party’s policies with Deng in command it is more than plausible that the renewal should include change in economic policies as well. Deng found his ideological loophole by quoting Mao when he told to seek truth from the facts, that then allowed Deng
to depart from Mao by saying that the circumstances have changed and the Party’s line must also change.

6.2. In the Socialist Construction

Five years after Deng’s closing speech he is again addressing the Congress, but this time he is the *de facto* leader of the Party. Hua Guofeng resigned in 1981 and pro-reformists rose to the top levels of both the state and the Party leadership with Deng Xiaoping’s support. Political and economic reforms could now begin anew, even if the last Maoist remnants of the Party weren’t sidelined until the early 90’s when the Chinese economic miracle picked up momentum.

In his opening address to the 12th Congress Deng builds upon the points he made in the speech to the 11th Congress, but now he is able to fully develop and freely speak out his position. The old Maoist discourse is gone and most of it’s remnants have been superseded by Deng’s account on Chinese Marxism and his reading of the recent history. In particular he takes the eight Congress (held in 1956) as a starting point where, for example, the Mao Zedong Thought was removed from the Party constitution after it was included in the seventh Congress.

In Deng’s account the eight Congress had a “correct line”, but the Party was “inadequately prepared ideologically for all-round socialist construction“. Therefore mistakes were made in the years following that hindered the progress of the country. In part this ideological backwardness is a reference to China still being a feudal society as Deng suggests in other works. While the class struggle is over and productive forces are in the hands of the proletariat the political system is still backward with Mao essentially as the emperor. Without Mao and without his followers the socialist construction can now proceed as it was supposed to.

Or as in Deng’s account the “the Party has returned to its correct policies”, Deng merits this to the “deeper understanding of the laws governing China’s socialist construction”. With the second point Deng is able to criticise Mao’s policies without directly criticising him, as even if Deng’s position is strong he is not able to completely disregard Mao. Even Mao was not able to see where the Chinese society was heading when he was in power and when his policies were steadfastly implemented. Deng
doesn’t specifically mention Mao in this context as he is still faced with Mao’s legacy, both politically and ideologically, but the implied target is Mao, the Gang of Four and the like. He avoids directly blaming anyone and prefers to call for unity and adherence to the need of the masses and to further strengthen China.

To strengthen China and to further promote the interests of the people Deng sees only one possibility; to develop the economy and to further realise the socialist construction. When dealing with problems and challenges of socialist construction Deng gives this answer: “Economic construction is at the heart of these tasks; it is the basis for the solution of our external and internal problems.” Deng emphasises the need to carry on with the socialist construction and deems it to highest honour to “love our socialist motherland and to contribute all to her socialist construction.”

The passage also reveals the second important aspect of Deng’s policy. While it is necessary to promote good relations with the outside powers and to learn from the foreign experiences it is equally important that the Chinese people go their own way and make their own way. According to Deng the “mechanical copying and application of foreign experience won’t get us anywhere”. It is the Chinese themselves that should carry the burden of developing China and they should not rely on outside help. The reasons Deng gives to this are the historical lessons and the specific conditions of China that outsiders do not understand. Opening up to the world does not mean surrender to the outside world, “no foreign country can expect China to be its vassal”, as Deng puts it.

Deng speaks in the discourse of socialist construction, economic growth is important, but it doesn’t yet dominate his speech. Economy is a means to an end for Deng, and the end is a socialist society that is developed in an all-round way. Economic vocabulary is virtually absent while the theory of socialist construction is extensively discussed. The masses are the most important resource and the sole reason why China and the Party need to grow in strength and develop.

The socialist construction is still ideologically grounded in Mao in the form of devoting oneself to the masses, but it dismisses the notion of continuing revolution. The class struggle is no more and now all energy can be directed into building the society. By appealing to the eighth Congress and to its progressive resolutions Deng is able to negate the decisions and policies made between the eight and
eleventh Congress. Those decisions of course include his dismissal from the Party organs and exile to the provinces.

6.3. Analysis

6.3.1. The Socialist Construction

Revolutionary rhetoric alone cannot build a society, it also takes a lot of hard work. That is the message that Deng is conveying to the delegates in both of his speeches. Revolution scarcely gets mentioned, twice in the first speech and only once in the second. In all of the cases revolution is only a part in the phrase “revolutionary line” or “revolutionary cause”, or in other words it is used as an synonym for ‘the Party line’ or the ‘Marxist line’. Revolution has been stripped of its former glory and it’s no more than a box to check for ritualistic purposes.

Furthermore the two-line approach that characterises Maoist China is absent in Deng’s speeches. Even if it is possible to see for example the Gang of Four as ‘bourgeoisie’ Deng at least does not analyse the situation in those terms. For Deng it is not a matter of contradictions, but a simple observation: the way things were done in the past did not work. Mistakes were made and wrong people got hold of power, so the main problem comes from rectifying those mistakes and making sure that it does not happen again.

At first Deng has to subtly mask his position in the language he uses. Deng’s call for “renewal” of the working practices contrasts with the call of the Maoists, who call for “upholding” the traditional work practices (Baum 1994, 50). In Deng’s account there is a historical break between the eighth Congress and the China of late seventies-early eighties. In his speech to the eleventh Congress Deng doesn’t have much room to manoeuvre, but by the 12th he has effectively secured his position and no longer has to hold back and can clearly and explicitly articulate that.

The explicit statement that economic growth is answer to all of China’s problems goes against the very vein of Maoism, where nonmaterial incentives are the preferred way (ibid. 52). Before Deng’s rise to power economic growth seemed dangerously bourgeois, as it placed material gain in the foreground.
With material gain some people are bound to benefit more than others, which in the minds of Maoists would lead to the creation of a new bourgeoisie. However it is always socialist construction for Deng. The wealth is to be distributed evenly throughout the society, not to the hands of the few as it would in a capitalist society. Nevertheless some people have to get rich first to get ball rolling.

Deng makes it absolutely clear that he does not intend to let China become a capitalist country again, but to become a parrot-like sham Marxist is just as bad. Ultimately the capitalists and the sham Marxists are the same in the sense that they both go against the best interests of the masses. Zhou Enlai had a similar sentiment when he rapped Lin Biao.

6.3.2. The Justification of the Party Rule

Deng’s account does not directly address the issue of the legitimacy of the Party rule, as it is never in question, but implicitly he does make a case for it. The well-being of the masses is the prime directive for Deng. Therefore if the Party can raise the well-being of the masses and build a well-off society then the Party has the implicit approval of the masses. Equally important is that the Party must safeguard the Chinese society from capitalism and the inevitable inequality that would follow a return to a capitalist society.

The argument for the Party rule has now been moved from an ideological one to a far more practical type, a move already familiar with Deng. It should not be taken as rejecting ideology altogether, after all it is a socialist society he is building. Ultimately the successes of the Party policies are now judged by its performance and the raising of the Chinese society as well as the improvement of the living standards of the masses. Mere talk is no longer enough to justify the stake to power.

In May of 1978 a Chinese newspaper *Guanmin Daily* published an article by an unnamed ‘special correspondent’, the article claimed that “practice is the sole criterion of truth” (Baum 1994, 58). Deng is the likely author of the article, but it cannot be said for certain. It did however signal the beginning of a struggle between Deng and the whateverists (or Maoists). Lessons learned in the real world are the only way to discern the laws governing society and its development, not any *a priori* theoretical constructs.
7. The Party in Power

7.1. Jiang Zemin on the Socialist Construction

If one fast-forwards the history of the People’s Republic of China the scenes remain similar until, almost in a blink of an eye, the new modern China suddenly emerges. The new China was in the making for decades before, all the way back to 1956 when Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping first begun to talk economy as in the Eight Congress. However the new China had to wait until the final rise of Deng Xiaoping in order to be fully realised. The twenty-odd-years between the 12th Congress and the year 2002, when Jiang Zemin gave his report to the 16th Congress saw the gradual, if in retrospect astonishingly fast, transition to market-led economy.

Jiang Zemin ascended to the top of the CCP after the Tiananmen protests when Zhao Ziyang lost his political backing due to his handling of the situation. The China Jiang Zemin inherited was already well and truly a country where economy reigned supreme. The basis for building a socialist society was in Deng’s account a strong economy and now that aim has been, in part at least, fulfilled. Economic questions are markedly highlighted in comparison to the Mao era reports and even to Deng’s speeches. The need to further strengthen the economy is paramount, but equally important is building the society. Economic growth is not a goal in itself, but it supports the wider ambition to build a “well-off society in an all-round way”.

If Lin Biao was a trough-and-trough Maoist then Jiang is a Dengist to the core in his account. He is continuing the socialist construction that Deng proposed in his address to the 12th congress. Jiang’s report revolves around domestic issues and developing the nation and the society. The need to reform, to innovate and to further develop the culture and the science, as well as the economy as the backbone of progress are the key points of his report. Jiang sums up the aims of the Party as:

“[to] carry forward our cause into the future, keep pace with the times, build a well-off society in an all-round way, speed up socialist modernisation and work hard to create a new situation in building socialism with Chinese characteristics.”
The passage comes down to socialist construction. The key concerns are development, modernisation and construction. To build a well-off society means to increase the living standards of the people and it serves both as the main reasoning to justify the Party’s existence as well as the main goal for the Party. Overall the living standards have risen considerably in China, but the slow rate of progress as well as growing inequality is a concern:

“The well-off life we are leading is still at a low level; it is not all-inclusive and is very uneven. The principal contradiction in our society is still one between the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backwardness of social production.”

Therefore the need to speed up development and the socialist construction is paramount. This is to be done by speeding up the economic reform and by stimulating the economy. The Party must give full support to the market forces in order to achieve the goals of socialist construction:

“Large and medium state-owned enterprises must continue their reform to convert themselves into standard companies in compliance with the requirements of the modern enterprise system […]”

Market economy is seen as the preferred way forward, while certain “lifeline” industries must remain in the state’s hands; others are to be cut loose so that they may encourage growth through mutual competition. This is the first time that economy has taken such a central stand in the material. In Lin Biao’s report economy is not even mentioned and Zhou Enlai grants economy a mere sentence, even in Deng’s speeches the economy has not taken up the forefront.

The *discourse is economy* then. Matters are discussed from economic point of view. The problems are material, not ideological, and the solutions are derived from economy, for example the answer to problem of growing unemployment is to “improve the business environment and create more jobs.” It is a task for the Party to encourage the private sector. The policies proposed by the Party are market oriented and designed to encourage economic growth. The society that Jiang’s account calls for is well-off in an “all-round way”, which is meant to mean that not only the material needs are important, but cultural and scientific as well. Even if science is above all it is only a pillar that supports the economy through invention and innovation.
The previous reports and the speeches revolved much more around persons or ideological concerns, Lin Biao’s account in particular, but Jiang’s account is much more interested in factual matters. It is written in very a matter-of-fact tone and it reads just as one would expect a ‘report’ to be. Lin Biao had a passionate tone in his report and Deng Xiaoping can be very eloquent, but Jiang makes a very long and detailed account on the aims and challenges facing the Party in the 2000’s.

7.2. Hu Jintao and the people

The Chinese Communist Party is unique in it’s power succession among the autocratic systems as it has institutional limits to how long a person can be in power. A premier is limited to ten year term. In 2007 Hu Jintao made the first accession to power trough this system. As the new head of the Party he gave the report to the 17th national congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Between the Jiang Zemin’s report and Hu’s new one China had steamed ahead in virtually every aspect of development.

The Chinese economy in particular had made progress in strides and the economic growth shows no signs of slowing down. In Hu’s account much of the goals that the 16th congress set are met even if a number of problems still exists and more work is ahead. As with Deng and Jiang, Hu’s account also stresses the need for more reform and more rapid development. Where Jiang Zemin spoke of “Well-off society in an all-round way” Hu qualifies it by adding “moderately” right before it. It is as if had dawned to the CCP that the reform hadn’t gone ahead quite as well as planned.

Even if Hu devotes a good-sized portion of his report to economic issues he spends much more time in dealing other societal problems. Even in the economic parts he’s less interested in pure growth than Jiang, choosing to focus more on reforming the economic system for the betterment of the people’s lives. Economic matters perhaps no longer need the same ideological encouragement than before, if anything it needs to be toned down. The chapter dealing with economy is titled “Promoting sound and rapid development of the national economy”, the critical word here being “sound”. Economic growth is important, but it must be carried out in a sensible and scientific manner. Deng insisted that the country would never become bourgeois, Jiang cut the reins of the economy and now Hu is trying to moderate the system again.
Hu frequently mentions a harmonious society and he makes it the central part of the Party’s line. More than the other reports Hu’s account stresses the people as the main concern for the Party. The needs of the people should come first; although Deng also placed great importance on the needs of the people, but with Hu it is even more so. He hammers down the point of putting people first time and time again, for example:

“The Scientific Outlook on Development takes development as its essence, *putting people first as its core*, comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development as its basic requirement, and overall consideration as its fundamental approach.” [emphasis added]

”We must always put people first. Serving the people wholeheartedly is the fundamental purpose of the Party […].” [emphasis added]

In Hu’s account the best interests of the people are best served by following socialism with Chinese characteristics; naturally as it is the official Party doctrine. Socialism with Chinese characteristics however comes with Hu’s additions (scientific outlook on development and harmonious society) to it:

”Social harmony is an essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Scientific development and social harmony are integral to each other and neither is possible without the other. ”

The unnerving need to serve the people forms the backbone of Hu’s account, so it would be prudent to call the *discourse here ‘the people’*. Not the revolutionary masses of the times long gone, but the people. Even the very word ‘revolution’ has lost it’s former glory. It is mentioned thirteen times, but it used mostly in the phrase ”revolution in military affairs”, which refers to the dramatic changes that technology has brought to warfare. Elsewhere it is mentioned mainly when Hu ritually recounts the Party history and it’s achievements.

While progress and economic growth are of great importance they are no longer virtues on their own right, but a means to an end. In this sense Hu is much closer to Deng than what Jiang ever was.
7.3. Analysis

7.3.1. The people

Jiang Zemin is thought to be one of the least ideologically motivated leaders of the CCP. His almost single-minded concentration on economic growth does show his dedication to some aspects of Dengian thinking, but Jiang falls short of fully following him. His report is an ideological wasteland, where hollow phrases fill the gaps of any real content aside from the economy. It is not hard to think him as a ‘sham Dengist’ or a ‘whateverist’, with the suitable sense of irony that goes with it. Perhaps it is telling that Jiang’s report is the longest in the material by a fair margin, but the analysis of it is the shortest by equally clear margin. Between Deng’s account and the one by Jiang Zemin China has gone through an impressive metamorphosis, but still Jiang is speaking in the old language. He should have seen the change around him and according to the way the Party goes about its business in the ideological front and change his position accordingly.

Hu on the other hand seems to be more innovative. Although ‘the people’ as a focus of the political elite is an old idea in China and goes all the way back to the Confucian roots of Chinese political thinking. Both Confucius and the Communist Party of China consider that it is a central task for the authorities to secure the well-being of the people, but also to judge how the well-being is achieved and what it actually measures to.

Jiang’s solution for the betterment of people’s lives was economic growth and the material well-being that it brought with it, but Hu having realised the shortcomings of mere material goods proposes a new approach. Scientific outlook on development is a very Dengian idea; he rejected the wisdom of the masses and wanted to bring in experts that were in Maoist minds suspiciously “bourgeois”. Because only experts could tackle the serious problems that plague China and the only way forward was advanced technology.

On the other hand society must also be “harmonious”, an idea that is as old as China itself. The very heart of Chinese political thought is the harmonious society as it is the ultimate aim for all rulers. In a
harmonious society everything is in it’s right place, the people content and above all the rulers unopposed. Social harmony in the Confucian sense presupposes a virtuous ruler and obedient people.

Hu’s account also follows the pattern, it is the responsibility of the Party to listen the needs of the people and work for the best of the people. However there should be no mistaking that the Party’s monopoly of political power is absolute. Social harmony then has a double meaning; a society where the rulers follow the best interest of the people, but equally much a society where the Party has no opposition. A cynical reader is tempted to read “social harmony“ as nothing more than euphemism for quelling the opposition.

The notion that Hu speaks of the people, not masses, is important as it signifies the transition from a revolutionary party to a party-in-power. In Jiang’s almost single-minded ‘growth for growth’s sake’ account the position of Party as one in power is not all apparent.

Equally interesting is to consider that by raising the people as the focal point Hu downplays the state. The state is almost a competing agent in China, where the Party firmly controls politics. If the state is raised to the centre stage the Party would have to brace itself for questions regarding on its position above the state. Perhaps for similar reasons the communist party, while exploiting nationalist sentiments, is downplaying the nation as well.

7.3.2. The Justification of the Party rule

Since Jiang makes a big deal about the economy it comes as no surprise that easiest way for him to defend the Party’s rule is money. The unwritten ‘Deal’ between the people and the Party was (and still is) that the Party will make you rich and you don’t talk politics. As long as Jiang can keep the economy growing and the people wealthy the Party can justify its existence with the Deal.

However it is a precarious position. Should the economic growth stump for any reason the Party is left without a good reason. Growing income disparity is also a major problem with this argument, even if Deng did provide a way around it by saying that somebody has to get rich first, the glaring difference between the wealthy and the poor mars the Deal quite a bit.
In Hu Jintao’s account the economic growth and material well-being have been stripped from their former importance. While it is still paramount that the economy grows and that material well-being increases, they have been demoted to a supporting role. The emphasis is now on bettering people’s lives. With economic growth alone one is easily left out and the ones not reaping the benefits of economic growth will grow discontent. It is more acceptable, one would think, if you don’t see the immediate results from an effort to raise the living standards of an entire nation.

Additionally by appealing to the harmonious society argument Hu is tapping into the very heart of Chinese culture. In the West politics is seen more often as competition, or more recently as a marketplace, of conflicting interests and ideas. Through competition and conflict the ‘best’ idea wins. The Chinese are more inclined to think this as mere chaos, favouring tradition and stability instead. The deep-grained aversion for conflict is in part a cultural trait that stems all the way back from Confucius as well as fairly recent (in the Chinese time scope) history.

Zhou Enlai appealed to a similar argument in 1973 as Hu does in 2007. A good part of Zhou Enlai’s justification for the Party rule was the need to protect China for turmoil and chaos, such as the kind he accused Lin Biao for bringing to China. In this sense Hu’s “harmonious society” is nothing new. The idea that only the communist Party of China can keep in the order and out the chaos is an old adage in China by now, however it is still a very effective way of keeping political opposition down.

In fact in Hu’s account, despite the importance of progress and the need for implementing scientific principles on development, some very traditional values and ways of thinking are present. Hu seems to be making a case for a Confucian China, not a communist China.
8. Conclusions

8.1. Comparing the material

The reports by Lin, Zhou, Jiang and Hu and the two speeches by Deng were originally divided into three groups based on the theoretical considerations on the development of Chinese socialism. Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai were grouped together as examples of Maoist China, after those Deng’s two speeches are examples of reformist, or ‘practical’ phase in Chinese Socialism, and finally Jiang and Hu represent the ‘new’ China. Firstly the Mao-era reports do clearly show the importance of revolution and the nature of Maoism as a mass movement. Secondly Deng’s speeches move away from the purely ideological considerations and put much more emphasis on pragmatic issues, though there is a clear ideological undertone. Finally the last two reports show an extension of Deng’s thoughts and in Hu’s case a move away from Deng to more original ideological construct.

There were three questions that this thesis sought to answer. Firstly what are the discourses that the speakers are speaking in? Secondly what is the justification for the Party rule? And third, how have the discourses and justifications changed over time?

The discourses identified ultimately come down to four: Firstly for Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai both keep up with the discourse of revolution, albeit with some differences between the two. Secondly Deng’s speeches are in essence the same, Dengism that is, but with marked difference in tone. His first speech draws away from ideology and speaks in very pragmatic discourse. When Deng gives his second speech he is more able to spell out his ideological commitment and speaks in the discourse of socialist construction. After Deng, Jiang raises the discourse of economy to the foreground in more explicit terms than any other speaker. Finally Hu while seeing that the economic growth is important focuses on the people as his main discourse.

In some ways the theoretical predictions did hold true, but some differences can be seen. There is a marked difference between Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai. Even if they are both grouped in the Maoist camp Lin Biao is far more clearly a Maoist, whereas Zhou Enlai in times seems to harbour almost Dengian
thoughts. Personal qualities go a long way in explaining the differences between the two, but equally important is the changing social and political situation. Where Lin Biao’s report is given to the Congress during the Cultural Revolution and is deeply rooted to that particular phase of Chinese history Zhou’s report is given in a time when the Cultural Revolution is already waning and a new direction for the Party is needed.

Similarly the two speeches by Deng show a period of transition, namely between Mao’s China and the post-Mao China. Even if Deng is promoting his own political and ideological theories in both speeches the latter is much more openly Dengian. Only after Mao had died could Deng express himself without the need to hold back. The death of Mao is perhaps the single most important historical event to happen in the history of the People’s Republic for it marked not only a transition to Dengian policies, but as well as a clear shift from a rule by one man to the rule of one party. That is not to say that Mao didn’t need political allies or that Deng wasn’t a strongman in is own right, but a more subtle difference in how things were seen.

Finally there are Jiang and Hu in the modern superpower China. Jiang was thought to be the leader that was least interested in ideological matters. The material does strongly support that view as he tends to concentrate on promoting economical growth and not any ideology. Hu on the other hand has more subdued, yet clear Dengian tone, but at the same time he has strong Confucian ideas. China didn’t change much qualitatively between 2002 and 2007, but everything China was in 2002 it was even more so five years later.

The two largest shifts in ideology occur between Zhou and Deng, and Jiang and Hu. However historical changes do not neatly match the ideological changes. Mao is still alive, if ailing, when Deng makes his first speech. Sure enough the second Deng speech, which occurs after Mao’s death is much more definitively Dengian. Between Jiang and Hu the change is less obvious, but is nevertheless clear.

Given Jiang’s disinterest in ideological matters it is maybe tempting to ignore him and draw comparisons between Deng and Hu instead. With Hu there are some clearly Dengian thoughts; such as the importance of the people as the main concern of the Party, use of experts in the guise of the
scientific outlook principle and social harmony that is already present with Deng when he rallies against the Cultural Revolution.

8.2. Recurring themes

There are two important themes that seem to crop up regardless of the speaker. They make up the hard core of Chinese thinking. Firstly the Party exists to serve the people and secondly the Party is the best insurance against chaos and social collapse. The first concern is by no means uniquely Chinese trait, but it is given a great deal of importance in China. It is already well present in imperial China, where the emperor was expected to make the decisions with the best interest of the people in mind (Chu 2001,44).

How to best serve the people is of course a whole different question altogether and one of the greatest ideological splits of the Chinese socialists occurs here. Maoist way of thinking would hold that by continuing the revolution and by battling against the bourgeoisie the vast majority of the people are better off than they would be under a capitalist system. Those who subscribe to Deng’s ideology would argue that while it is important to keep the bourgeoisie in check and to maintain the monopoly of political power the Party could, and should, promote private enterprise to strengthen the economy and improve the living standards of the people.

Particularly Deng and his followers stress time and time again that the Party’s main concern should be the people. Hu’s account is perhaps the most accentuated in this regard, but Deng too makes it absolutely clear by saying that “We must not, for a moment, divorce ourselves from the masses.” The ‘people’ is almost a magic word for the Chinese leaders. Everything can be justified by saying that it is in the best interests of the people to do so. Also given the communitarian thinking that is prevalent in the Asian cultures people are more likely to accept a personal inconvenience if it’s for a greater good. That makes the ‘people’ an attractive rallying point for politicians trying to push for their policies.

While the people make one half of the core of the Chinese political thinking the people themselves typically aren’t allowed to ‘talk politics’. The Party, or historically the imperial court, has insisted on monopoly on political power. At virtually every turn the Chinese political thinkers past and present
have argued against the people wielding political power. Power is always projected from above, but always nominally at least for the people.

Should the people be given power they would, according to many Chinese thinkers, only lead the country to chaos. The fear of the fickly masses following the wrong leaders is present all over, but in China the very thought of democracy raises connotations of conflict. The Chinese worldview considers conflict as abhorrent and democracy is in its heart a method for solving contradictory interests of the people. Democracy then presupposes that there is a conflict to begin with and the Chinese will have none of it.

If conflict is an abomination for the Chinese, harmony on the other hand is the greatest social virtue there is. To best serve the people one must maintain social harmony. Imperial China with its devotion to Confucianism placed social harmony above all. Over two millennia later Hu is once again placing it as his leading thought. After Mao’s intensely revolutionary approach where social harmony is all but extinct history has made a full circle.

In many ways Maoism is an alien idea to China as it puts contradictions above all. It has to brush against the natural thinking of Chinese people. Historically conflict and revolution has been part of China as long as it has existed. Between periods of relative calm when imperial dynasties are powerful are times when things go wrong. A weak dynasty cannot control the empire so it begins to unravel and when the people have been pushed too far a rebellion occurs. Once a dynasty has been weakened enough it will violently collapse and a struggle for power will ensue. Against this background it would be more than tempting to think Mao as a rebel leader who is trying to become the emperor. In Mao’s case there is the added flavour of socialist ideology, but otherwise the analogy does hold true.

Meanwhile both Lin and especially Zhou make repeated calls for unity of all Chinese peoples. They do promote the idea of revolution of course, but make it seem that within proletariat harmonious society can exist. Revolution is necessary in order to achieve harmonious society, even if it paradoxically means that there should be no end to revolution. Contradictions that exist between classes cannot be solved and are thus a source of conflict. The contradictions must eradicated by the means of a revolution.
In Deng’s account such thinking is dismissed as misguided. Deng himself was of course a victim of the continuing revolution, so it comes as no surprise that he’s against it. There are other reasons why Deng strongly supports the idea of harmonious society, such as that the economy cannot develop in chaos and that revolution scares foreign investors away, but those are merely practical considerations. As it is mentioned before for Deng the people came first and having seen firsthand how much suffering chaos can bring it is paramount to him that order is maintained.

The Dengian approach to social order and harmony is much more Chinese than Mao’s. Where Mao and his teachers imported foreign ideas to China Deng seems to revert back to the old Chinese ideas, although always in the guise of Chinese socialism. Ironically then Mao behaved much like an emperor while Deng preferred to stay out of the limelight. Deng himself commented on China still being in the ‘feudal’ stage of history, most readily understood as a comment that is intended against Mao. Curiously then Deng, the man that is often credited of bringing China to the modern world, had some very old ideas.

8.3. Legitimacy

It should be noted that according to Max Weber a dictatorship can dispense “even the pretence to claim legitimacy” (Merquior 1980, 69) by using sheer violence. The Chinese authorities have indeed used violence to quell political opposition numerous times. However it does not necessarily mean that the Party is without legitimacy, or even a pretence of one, as the Party does justify its claim to power. Just as is the case with what “socialism” actually means, the justification for the Party rule has changed with the times.

However the core tendency of the justification is the same all through the material, that is the Party is to serve “the overwhelming majority of the people“. Let it be class or the euphemistic “advanced members of society” the majority interests always trump the small minority that is either openly oppressed or whose rights are otherwise trampled on. In the Chinese way of thinking the community comes first and the individual benefits by advancing the interests of the community. This is in contrast
to the western individualism that would claim otherwise; only if the individual is free to pursue his own interests does the society as a whole benefit.

In the Mao era China the best interests of the people were, according to the Party, pursued through revolution. Even revolution has to be justified in some way, let it be class struggle or overthrowing corrupt kings, but there has to be a reason for it nevertheless. For Mao revolution was a means to serve the best interests of the masses. Bourgeoisie elements threatened the newly-found freedom of the Chinese people so there was a need to continue the revolution indefinitely every few decades or so.

After Mao Deng saw that China was a poor and backward country in desperate need of reform, but he rejected revolution and mass movement as the way forward and focused on experts and economy instead. Modernising China at any cost was the main reason for the Party to exist. The ones meant to benefit from the modernisation were, of course, the Chinese people. Deng was still an old revolutionary and maintained that the bourgeoisie must be kept in check. Thus Deng serves as an ideological bridge between Mao and the ultra-economic Jiang.

The modern China is driven by economic growth so much so that the Party is now able to show the world and the Chinese people the wealth, the sparkling skyscrapers and all the glitter that used to be only a privilege of the west. The Party under Jiang claimed that the benefits that the economic growth was sufficient to excuse any and all violations of the rights of the small minority that challenged the Party.

Hu has since moved on to seek a new source of legitimacy in the old Chinese values. While material incentives are important for the Party, and undoubtedly even more so for the people, the focus is slowly shifting. Confucian ideals of the harmonious society are making a comeback in force.

It would be a mistake to dismiss the Party’s own efforts to seek legitimacy through ideology as mere talk. There is a degree of hypocrisy and incompetence in the Party’s claim to power if one considers the disparity between the image of what the Party would like to see and show to the world and the reality. Despite the difference the Party’s commitment to ideology and the claim of legitimacy are real.
The Chinese are actively discussing the Party legitimacy in China and the Party is encouraging the debate at least implicitly. There is widespread belief that the Party is either already facing a legitimacy crisis or that there are challenges to the Party’s legitimacy in the near future. (Gilley - Holbig 2009, 339, 343.)

Coercion alone is not what keeps the Chinese people in check, but a good majority of the people at least tolerates the Party. Calls for democracy are relatively few and far between, and while the people might treat the official justification with suspicion they don’t completely dismiss it either. The official line guides the policies on the ground. No matter how ineffective the leaders in Beijing may be in dealing with problems in far away reaches of the country the officials are ultimately bound to follow them.

The Party has largely abandoned its former revolution discourse, and it is nowhere more apparent than in Hu’s account. Since revolution can no longer be used to legitimise the Party rule something else has had to take its place. The Party has since moved to being a party in power, rather than being a revolutionary party. With it softer methods of persuasion, rather than coercion are being employed. Along with revolution the enemy rhetoric has all but disappeared, there are no more Lin Biaos or Gang of Fours lying in wait, nor are the bourgeoisie trying to push back the tide of history.

8.4. The changing discourse

The analysis confirms that the Communist Party of China is indeed capable of changing its ideological commitment, as the theoretical parts of the thesis suggested. There were four distinctly different discourses in the material, but with subtle differences between the accounts that ultimately reflect the same ideological commitment. Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai both gave accounts that were heavily linked with revolution and the person of Mao. Deng’s accounts were at heart the same; move away from Mao and a renewed commitment to the people. Jiang’s account was an exercise in misguided Dengism and in economic single-mindedness. Finally Hu’s account appears genuinely new for the communist Party when it actually reverts back to the old Chinese ideas.
There is however a point of discord here; is the Party genuinely innovating when it changes its ideology or are they merely *ad hoc* adjustments done in a desperate effort to retain power? It is also in doubt whether or not ideology plays any real significance to the Chinese leaders. China scholars are divided on the issue weather to believe or not that the change is sincere. On the one hand there are the critical scholars that maintain that the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party is nothing more than an excuse that they use to stay in power. Others say that the Party is indeed just as committed to ideology as it says and that the ideological guidelines such as Hu’s “harmonious society” are to be taken seriously.

Both sides of the argument have some points to bolster their case. The critical wing can point out the glaring differences between official policies and what’s actually happening on the ground so to speak. High Party leaders in Beijing speak of improving the common man’s life when real estate developers, with full Party support, drive that very same common man out of his house to build highly lucrative luxury apartments in Shanghai, only to mention one example. The same wing has however spelled for the doom of the Party for the past twenty years, but there appears to be no quick end to the Party. Likewise they insist that the Party has no popular support and it can maintain its position only by force. The few polls made in China by researchers do not fully support the claim though. For most of the people the Party is a necessary evil at worst and virtually irrelevant at best.

On the other side of the argument are the ones who hold a much more positive, relatively speaking, image of China. From this point of view the Party has changed its ideological position out of desperation, but because the very essence of the Party is change. According to this view the Party is in fact doing its best in serving the people when it redefines itself. The Party *is* still oppressive, but it has higher goals in mind than merely to hold on to power at any expense.

Given that the Communist Party is still in charge and the doom spellers have been proven wrong time and time again their *ad hoc* argument seems less than convincing. Also various policies are being implemented that follow the ideological commitments of the Party. Actual situation on the ground is different from the official line because the Party leaders in Beijing are relatively powerless outside the capital (An 2007, 145), but they are aware of the problems and at least try to rectify them. Therefore it is more likely that the Party is in fact sincere with its intentions.
If one accepts that the Party’s ideological line is sincere then their claim that the Party is “innovative” as for example Hu’s account mentions numerous times has credibility. Ultimately the two core principles that the Party has are: firstly the Party must remain politically unchallenged and secondly that the Party exists solely to serve the people. Virtually everything else is subject to change, as the material suggests.

8.6. Changing the times or changing with the times?

China and the Chinese Communist Party have gone through a remarkable metamorphosis, but if one follows the trail of thought of the China scholars who subscribe to the ad hoc view of the Party’s ideological development the question becomes: how much of the change can be attributed to the Party and how much is the Chinese society itself leading the change?

Firstly the Cultural Revolution was without a doubt led from above. It was just one of major mass movements launched by the Party after the 1950’s, which included for example the Hundred Flowers movement in 1956 and its backlash the anti-rightist campaign in 1957. The Cultural Revolution followed a similar pattern, but it was more extreme and it electrified the masses more efficiently.

While the Cultural Revolution was “personally initiated” by Mao in Lin Biao’s account Deng’s policies came out of farmers in Anhui province taking the matter into their own hands. The farmers secretly dispelled the collective farming and distributed the land back to the farmers resulting in great increase of production (Kaiwen 2004, 231). Deng with his typical sensitivity to pragmatism saw the value of returning the land back to the farmers, even if it went blatantly against Maoism. In Deng’s case there was a weak signal of a change that he then made an official policy which eventually became the household-responsibility system.

After Deng had set market reforms loose across China it took a life of its own. To get rich became the first priority for the people and the authorities alike. Against this background it’s easy to see Jiang’s ideological line as a reflection of the developments in the society. Finally Hu is taking back the
initiative by de-emphasising the economical angle, but the common mood is still very much like the one Jiang promoted, wealth is the most important value in the society.

The Party is capable of making major ideological undertakings and changes by its own initiative, but is also open to social pressure from the outside if the Party leadership is open to it, much like Deng. In the material the whole spectrum is present, From Mao’s clear top-to-bottom approach to Jiang’s appeasement of market forces with Deng and Hu in between. Dramatic changes in the society are rare and unpredictable. Death of Mao for example triggered massive changes both in the Chinese society and ideology of the Party, but there was no guarantee that Deng would succeed over Hua. From that event no one could have predicted how China would develop.

One can argue that the rules have changed since then. During the Mao era the politics of the Party were so intertwined with the person of Mao that any real development was severely retarded. As Deng put it, China was still trapped in a “feudal” stage of development under Mao. Now the Party at least has the possibility to change its direction. So far however it has steadfastly followed Dengism in its various guises as its main ideological line. Deng, despite his criticism for Mao’s dictatorship, had similar impact on the Party as Mao. His legacy has dominated the ideological line of the Party for decades. Even after Deng’s death the Party has followed his line, but how long it will continue to do so is impossible to say.

Dengism has offered an ideological scaffolding for Jiang and Hu to build two different interpretations of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. If Hu’s successor will build on Deng as well remains to be seen, but there are no indications to argue that he would not do so.

8.7. The Future

It is very likely that Hu will step down after the 18th Party Congress to be held in 2012. The Party has done its best to avoid protracted infighting when deciding on future leaders by imposing a two term limit to the new leaders, starting with Hu. Who will succeed Hu is not known for sure until the end of the 18th Congress and what ideological line he will pursue has to wait possibly all to the 19th Congress. Mostly the rumour mill has focused on Xi Jinping.
However given the power relations between different factions of the Party it is almost sure that Hu’s successor will come from the same faction. Former members of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) are currently in a good position in relation to other factions, such as the Shanghai Clique that Jiang represented (Bo 2008, 334, 347). If it is turns out that Hu’s successor is indeed from the CCYL - faction it is likely that he would follow the line set by Hu. There is probably going to be greater difference between Jiang and Hu than between Hu and his successor, because he is likely to come from the same faction inside the Party as Hu.

Should Xi succeed Hu he would bring his own addition to the development of Chinese socialism, and just as before he would have to use the preceding ideological achievements as his starting point. However in the case of Jiang Hu has essentially sidelined him ideologically and Jiang is now relatively unimportant. How much this represents the factional differences is uncertain, however. In any case Xi has to keep in mind some developments in the Chinese society, such as the rising nationalist sentiment.

Nationalism is on the rise as seen during the recent row between Japan and China over disputed Senkaku Islands (known as Diaoyu Islands in China). The Chinese are waking up to the fact that China does not play as great role in the world as they think it should. Also the Beijing Olympics were seen as a vindication of China’s newly-found self-esteem. How much nationalist sentiment will influence the Party’s ideological line is doubtful, as Hu’s account seems to downplay the state.

Dramatic changes in the ideological line are unlikely barring any unforeseeable and cataclysmic event. Most likely the slow pace of reform will continue well into the 2010’s with no or very little change in the core policies of the Party.

**Primary Sources**


Secondary Sources


