Book Outline
for

THE POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE OF CHINA

by

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This book will serve as an introductory text for the study of how China is governed and how policy is devised and implemented. It will be used for courses on Chinese politics as well as on comparative politics, the politics of transitions, post-communist and communist studies, and the politics of development (Third World studies). The reader will not be expected to have prior knowledge of the Chinese political system to use the book. The enduring dominance of the Communist Party in China and its success with economic growth, especially in comparison with Russia and its former satellites, has fuelled interest in the Chinese experience of reform. China has become an interesting empirical testing ground for theories about institutional change and the relationship between political form and economic growth. In addition, interest in China is increased for the comparativist because it raises fundamental questions about the politics of development and development strategies. Interest in such a book is heightened by the increased awareness of the importance of the Asia-Pacific region in the 21st century and China as one of the major players in the region will merit more scholarly attention than hitherto. How China responds to and integrates in the existing world order will be of vital importance for all countries.

There are a number of textbooks currently on the market of which the best are probably: Marc Blecher, China Against the Tides, Flemming Christiansen and Shirin Rai, Chinese Politics and Society. An Introduction, June Dreyer, China’s Political System. Modernization and Tradition, Kenneth Lieberthal, Governing China. From Revolution Through Reform, and John Bryan Starr, Understanding China. They are all well written and present good approaches to understanding the basics of the Chinese political system. With the exception of Starr, they devote much of the first part of the book, in some cases up to fifty percent of the total, to a discussion of political history. Subsequently, they review the governing structure before turning to those areas of the political system that they deem most important. The issues chosen vary across the volumes. This author also believes that history is important in terms of shaping the present and that it is important for students beginning with China to understand historical process. However the focus is clearly on how the historical legacy has influenced contemporary political choices and
the nature current political system. In particular, this book focuses on the changing nature of not only how China is governed and the changing nature of the state and its relationship to society but also the policy-making process in China. Other textbooks have paid less attention to this latter aspect of the outcome of the political process. However, it has become increasingly possible to analyze the policy process in China, as more sources and fieldwork opportunities have become available.
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**Introduction:**

The introduction will provide the reader with an overview of the complexity of China with its hugely varied geography, climatic zones, and 1.2 billion people comprising 55 different peoples. It will also set the general social and economic context in which change is taking place in China and orient the reader to how this can vary significantly from region to region. How China perceives itself and its place in the world will be covered. Also, the introduction will touch on issues of official ideology and popular belief systems.

**Chapter One:**

Rather than providing a detailed history of pre-1949 China, this chapter distills those elements of China’s revolutionary trajectory and political culture that have shaped politics and governance. The experience of the CCP before it took power was instrumental in shaping its political culture and not only its initial policy choices after 1949 but also represented a point of retrieval for policy innovation in the 1980s. The legacy of the communist revolution will discuss factors such as the question of party-military relations, institutional overlap and the tensions between institution building and personalized rule, the variety of policy experiences of communist-held areas before 1949, and the political style of mobilizational campaigns.

**Chapter Two:**

This chapter will review the history of the People’s Republic in terms of the different development strategies that have been adopted by its leadership. When the CCP took state power, one might have presumed that the search for a suitable political form to rule China would have ended with a unitary system under a Soviet-influenced political and economic structure. However, this was far from the case and beginning in the early 1950s there were dramatic swings not only in policy but also in the nature of the political structures and how China was governed. Each period will be analyzed in terms of the changing relationship between the party-state and society and the political, economic and social consequences of the chosen strategy.
Chapter Three:
The disruption of the political and economic structures wrought by the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) convinced a group of CCP leaders who rallied around Deng Xiaoping that a major change of strategy was necessary or the revolution would have been fought in vain. While the reforms began with the economy, they have marked a significant liberalization in previous regime practice in terms of party control over the economy, society and ultimately over public discourse. While liberalization was not intended to lead to democratization once social spaces were opened up by the state’s tactical withdrawal, it did lead to both the pressure for a further opening up of space and the filling of it with unorthodox ideas. This chapter will outline these reforms, their progress and the contestation over them.

Chapter Four:
This chapter analyzes the dynamics of the Chinese state structure, how these have changed over time and how the interaction with society has changed as a result of reforms. This would include discussion of how the system of household registration and workplace organization in urban and rural China led to an major intrusion of the state into not only the economic process but also into individual lives and shaped life choices to a significant degree. This will be followed by a discussion of how the reform process has significantly changed these relationships. The chapter will also look at the structure of the state in terms of the role played by the military and the security apparatus.

Chapter Five:
This chapter will begin with an in-depth discussion of the role of the party in the Chinese political system. Party and state in China have never been clearly separated and institutional overlap is a major complicating factor in China’s governance. This has been complicated by the dominance of a few individuals at the apex of the party structure. However, party organization has changed with the reforms and its membership is no longer dominated by the peasant soldiers who brought the CCP to power in 1949 nor, at the lower levels, by the disillusioned Soviet-trained apparachiks who have dominated the party leadership since the Cultural Revolution. In fact, with a membership of some 60
million, it is impossible to think of the party as an homogenous force. In addition, to explaining the organization of the party, this chapter will examine its changing membership and review the debates and different views about the nature of the party and its role in policy-making and China’s future development.

**Chapter Six:**
This chapter will outline the role and the structure of the central bureaucratic apparatus in China. Organs such as the National People’s Congress, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference will be described as will their changing role and influence in the political process. The chapter will also look at the role of the security apparatus in governing China as well as the revival of the legal system and the attempts by the current leadership to use to rule of law to govern its increasingly complex society.

**Chapter Seven:**
The relationship between the Center and the local has undergone significant changes. While the Center tries to exert political control over the localities through the system of party-sanctioned appointments of leading personnel, the Nomenklatura system, its fiscal capacity and its moral authority have declined. State revenues only amounted to 12 percent of GDP in 1998 down from 36 percent in 1978 and most localities are increasingly on their own to deal with the serious problems that confront them. The decline in state revenues has led to pressures at all levels and in all Chinese government agencies to meet recurrent costs form locally generated revenues. This chapter will review the changing center-provincial relationship and the role that provinces play. It will conclude with a discussion of the sub-provincial local state. In a sense real politics is local with outcome determined by local power structures and resource allocation. Within the same province and even in adjacent counties one can see radically different socio-political outcomes deriving from the reforms. What are the consequences of this for the nature of the local state and what are the consequences for governance and policy implementation.

**Chapter Eight:**
Until the reforms began in the late-1970s China was distinctive for political participation mobilized by the party leadership to show public support for their policies. Gradually this has begun to give way to more spontaneous forms of participation. First, the distinctive features of participation under Mao Zedong will be examined such as mass campaigns and the use of role models. While the current leadership still resorts to these techniques, their effectiveness is questionable and other forms of participation have developed. The chapter will look at the mechanisms that exist for citizen participation in the current political system ranging from sanctioned think tanks to electoral participation to formation of NGOs to protest and dissent.

Chapter Nine:
Contrary to the view that policy implementation is monolithic and the decision-making process is closed in a communist-ruled country such as China, historically there has been significant policy variation and experimentation throughout the country. While this was less visible under Mao’s rule, it has become more apparent as China has tried to introduce market influences into a centrally planned economy. One of the main ways to move national policy forward has been through controlled local experimentation that if successful is presented for adoption nationwide. This chapter looks at the changing policy-making environment in China, the increasing complexity of the decision-making process, and the problems of policy implementation.

Chapter Ten:
The key element of reform has been to introduce market influences into economic policy but no shortage of economic challenges remains. This chapter will review the main features of shifting economic policy as they have affected rural and industrial policy in China. In particular, we will consider the effect of the break-up of the communes and the re-introduction of household based production and the stimulation of small-scale rural industry. The limits to this strategy of economic reform will be analyzed. In the urban sector the chapter will concentrate on the reform of State Owned enterprises and the struggle over the role of the non-state sectors of the economy. It will look at the merits
Chapter Eleven:
Under Mao, urban and rural structures and welfare systems were kept separate through a system of household registration. With the reforms and the breakdown of state control over the individual and the emergence of alternative employment outside of the state sector, this bifurcation has been challenged and new approaches to social policy are needed. This chapter will look at the reform of urban social policy, particularly as related to enterprise reform and the restructuring of pension systems and the attempts to marketize housing and other benefits, and the new urban poverty. For the rural areas, it will look at the social challenges arising from migration, the problems of providing public goods in rural areas, and the state’s attempts to eradicate rural poverty.

Chapter Twelve:
Since 1949, China has had an ambivalent view of the world outside but one of the most striking aspects of the reforms has been China’s increased engagement with world trade and international organizations. When China rejoined the United Nations and took up its seat in the Security Council in 1971, foreign policy was still unsophisticated comprising a mixture of anti-Soviet united fronts and support for insurrectionary movements that sought to undermine US power and the dominant world order. This chapter reviews how foreign policy has shifted essentially from rejection of the status quo to acceptance and the willingness to participate more fully while working to change the rules of the game. In addition, the chapter will look at the economic dimension of China’s international relations, trade, foreign investment etc., and how this impacts on policy-making. As China becomes more integrated into the world economy, its economic progress will become inextricably linked with the general health of the world economy and the confidence of foreign investors.

Chapter Thirteen:
This chapter reviews the future challenges facing China as it enters the 21st century. Such massive changes as outlined in the book have not gone unchallenged and new interests have been formed and new coalitions opposed to further reforms. We shall outline the potential for further reform and its consequences. The chapter will review the major challenges facing China in the economic, social and environmental fields and last but not least in the arena of domestic and global governance. The outcome of how China meets these challenges will determine whether the country does indeed become a threat or a responsible member of the world community.

Chapter Fourteen:

Study of the Chinese political system used to be dominated by theories designed to analyze the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, the survival of the CCP beyond the demise of the Soviet Empire and its developmental approach that opens up the economy without significantly amending the political power structure has attracted the attention of a number of scholars interested in the politics of transition. This chapter will analyze the Chinese experience in light of theories about transitions and will try to highlight what is special to the Chinese case and what is of more general theoretical applicability. In addition, the chapter will review approaches and methodologies that have been useful for understanding Chinese politics such as cultural explanations, factions etc. as well as looking at the relevance of more recent theoretical trends such as new institutionalism, discourse analysis, and theories of democratic transitions.