

Journal of the British Association for Chinese Studies

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Articles

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-- Lauren Dickey

**Leaning to the Left: The Post-War Political Reorganisation of Chinese Women Activists
within the CCP United Front Framework (1945-1949)**
-- Vivienne Xiangwei Guo

**The Contested Role of Foreign and Domestic Foundations in the PRC: Policies, Positions,
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Essays & Notes

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**The Dangers of Taking Responsibility and Acting on One's Conscience in 21st Century China:
A Review Essay of Xu Zhiyong's *To Build a Free China: A Citizen's Journey***
-- Gerda Wielander

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This e-journal is a peer-reviewed publication produced by the British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS). It is intended as a service to the academic community designed to encourage the production and dissemination of high quality research to an international audience. It publishes research falling within BACS' remit, which is broadly interpreted to include China, and the Chinese diaspora, from its earliest history to contemporary times, and spanning the disciplines of the arts, humanities and social sciences.

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Editors' Introduction

The academic year 2016-2017 marked the 50th anniversary of the formal establishment of the British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS). In order to celebrate this landmark in BACS history, current President, Jane Duckett, invited three former presidents—Don Rimmington, Stephan Feuchtwang and Tao Tao Liu—to reminisce on the early history of the Association and some of its major achievements over the years. Their essays presented here reveal how serendipitous beginnings have led to over 50 years of extensive activities as the Association has lobbied tirelessly on behalf of an ever-expanding field. From teaching and research, to school outreach and government engagement, and of course to the establishment of our very own journal, successive Councils have worked hard to build a strong profile for Chinese Studies that will ensure continued success over the next 50 years and beyond.

We are also pleased to be able to include a highly topical essay by Gerda Wielander, which reviews Xu Zhiyong's 2017 memoir, *To Build a Free China: A Citizen's Journey*, in the light of recent political developments in China, including Liu Xiaobo's untimely death on 13 July. Written in her personal capacity as a scholar of China rather than as *JBACS* editor, the views expressed in it are her own and do not reflect the position of *JBACS* or the British Association for Chinese Studies.

This issue marks another milestone as we say a fond farewell and many thanks to our founding Editor, Don Starr, who came to the end of his term of office last year. From Volume 1 in 2011 to Volume 6 in 2016, Don oversaw the development of *JBACS* from its first tentative beginnings to the mature journal before you today. Even before the publication of the first issue, Don had worked for several years on developing various concepts for a BACS-run journal, all with a particular eye on how to best support our academic community in the challenging times of RAE/REF, and the increasing demands for open access

publication. As well as leading the development of the journal, Don also undertook the onerous task of copy-editing many of the issues to sometimes very tight deadlines. We are sure you will join us in thanking Don for his contribution and wish him well as he enjoys his new-found free time!

In this issue, alongside the essays, we are pleased to introduce three new authors to the *JBACS* stable. The first two research articles, from Lauren Dickey and Vivienne Xiangwei Guo, continue to showcase the excellent work undertaken by our early career researchers in the UK. Both were ranked highly in last year's BACS Early Career Researcher Competition and, following in the footsteps of Pamela Hunt and Jie Li (both published in *JBACS* Volume 6, 2016), we have been very pleased to work with them over the past year to bring their research to publication. The papers reveal the breadth of scholarship in Chinese Studies today—Lauren's paper examines four elements of strategic tradition in the cross-Strait relationship, whilst Vivienne's paper looks at the post-war political reorganisation of Chinese women activists within the CCP United Front framework. Joining them is Andreas Fulda, whose work on foreign and domestic foundations sheds new light on the contested roles of such organisations in the PRC.

Last, but not least, we would like to formally welcome our new sub-editor, Scott Pacey, who joins us from the University of Nottingham. Given the increasing number of submissions to the journal, we hope we didn't undersell the magnitude of the task in hand in the job advert!

We look forward to working together to establish *JBACS* as a regular biannual publication with issues in January and July every year. With rigorous double-blind peer-review (and here we must thank all of our excellent referees and Editorial Board members, who have worked hard, and to often tight deadlines, over the past year to ensure the quality of both our ECR prize and research articles), we aim to establish *JBACS* as one of the leading English language journals on Chinese Studies in Europe.

Sarah Dauncey and Gerda Wielander

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Strategic Theory and Xi Jinping's Taiwan Test

Lauren Dickey

King's College London and the National University of Singapore

Abstract

Whether or not Xi Jinping will pursue reunification with Taiwan presents a serious challenge for scholars and policy practitioners alike. But is reunification still an option, or is Xi's pursuit of this steadfast goal of the Communist Party too little, too late? This paper will utilise strategic theory—a set of purposive assumptions delineated in the work of Thomas Schelling—to examine how the concepts, resources, and objectives of Chinese strategy toward Taiwan align with the objective of reunification. Building on the notion of a “limited war” in the contemporary cross-strait relationship, this paper acknowledges Beijing's ability for heavy-handed military punishment of a Taiwan that seeks independence, but focuses instead on how Beijing has utilised available strategic tools to increase the risk of all-out war. This paper will argue that it is Beijing's ability (or inability) to manipulate perceptions of risk that impact progress toward the objective of reunification. The paper begins with an overview of strategic theory, and its core assumptions and critiques, before elucidating four elements of strategic tradition in the cross-strait relationship: legal, political, geoeconomic, and military. It then evaluates, both individually and collectively, the efficacy of each instrument within Chinese strategy toward Taiwan.

Keywords: *cross-strait relations, Xi Jinping, Chinese strategy, strategic theory.*

In the Beijing-Taipei relationship, the more things change, the more they stay the same. After Xi Jinping met Ma Ying-jeou in Singapore in November 2015, there was hope for a new era in cross-strait relations and cooperation. However, little progress has emerged since; and, particularly since the Democratic Progressive Party and Tsai Ing-wen took office in May 2016, there has been a marked cool in the relationship. Taking this context as but a starting point, there are many questions emerging from a close examination of the cross-strait relationship: why progress is gradual, why the status quo (or its variants) persists, and why reunification has not materialised. From such questions

springs the puzzle at the core of this paper: how is Xi's strategy toward Taiwan striving to attain the objective of reunification, and why has it been unsuccessful?

To answer this question, this paper will put forth a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of what Chinese strategy toward Taiwan is. Different from countless existing assessments of Chinese *policy* toward Taiwan, a strategic focus involves digging into the interaction between ways, ends, and means developed and pursued by Beijing. To do so, as will be discussed below, this paper will rely on strategic theory as pioneered in the works of Thomas Schelling and his protégés to develop analytical and empirical rigour. As the only piece of research to utilise this method vis-à-vis cross-Strait relations, this framework serves as the basis for tracing elements of a Chinese strategic tradition while accounting for the role of interdependence, commitments and threats, mixed-motive bargaining processes, and the potential for conflict in the Taiwan Strait. The discussion herein examines China's Taiwan strategy in the context of a "limited war"—a situation in which Beijing, despite its ability to militarily punish Taiwan, has largely chosen to pursue its political objectives through other, less kinetic tools of statecraft. Through the use of strategic theory as an analytical lens, this paper offers utility to both scholars and practitioners in tracing and analysing the efficacy of Chinese strategy.

Strategic Theory: An Analytical Method for Strategic Problems

Nearly seventy years ago, Bernard Brodie called for a "genuine analytical method" to use in approaching strategic problems (1949: 484). One such method is that of strategic theory, an analytical tool for examining the interaction between ways, means, and ends which "opens the mind to all the possibilities and forces at play," thereby prompting scholars and practitioners alike "to consider the costs and risks of [their] decisions and weigh the consequences of those of [their] adversaries, allies, and others" (Yarger, 2006: 2). The application of strategic theory enables the researcher to gather and analyse empirical evidence of how strategy is developed and implemented, what effects emerge, and what policy outcomes and implications arise. It extends beyond the realm of pure military strategy to find middle ground between a historical approach of analysis and the rigidity of theoretical

frameworks. While neither a “checklist” nor a “cookbook solution”, what strategic theory ultimately offers is a way to understand how an actor defines, articulates, and employs strategy toward an opponent (Yarger, 2006: vii). To make such an understanding operational, strategic analysis herein relies upon process tracing, or the “systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analysed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator” (Collier, 2011: 823). Within this narrative, it is the examination and analysis of values shaping Beijing’s selection and ability to apply instruments from its strategic toolkit that will enable an analysis of Chinese strategy toward Taiwan.

One of the main assumptions in strategic theory is that war is used deliberately by political actors to achieve political objectives. In Clausewitzian logic, war as a political instrument is strategically (and intentionally) focused on the objective of dealing a single debilitating attack to destroy the enemy.¹ But the reason strategic theory tends to focus on conflict can be seen in the very essence of how the concept of strategy has evolved. British soldier and military theorist B.H. Liddell Hart defined strategy as “the art of distributing and employing military means to fulfil the ends of policy” (2008: 126), what Stone has further repackaged as the “instrumental link between military means and political ends” (2011: 4). Both definitions—among countless others—take a Clausewitzian approach by placing a clear emphasis upon the military responsibility to attain policy objectives (Elkus, 2014; Howard, 1983).

Strategy in today’s globalised, networked space is a far more complex creature, encompassing all available instruments of policy and statecraft in thinking beyond conflict to the subsequent peace (Freedman, 2013: 136). Building upon Clausewitzian thought but moving beyond pure military strategy, the work of strategic theory seeks to explain and investigate situations wherein actors are “endeavouring to secure their interests ... against the interests of other political actors” (Smith & Stone, 2011: 29-30). Such endeavours are increasingly characterised by the absence of kinetic war; instead, a “new species”

¹ This logic is captured in the oft-cited excerpt from *On War*: “... war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. ... The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose” (Howard & Paret, 1989: 87).

of war and “competition in risk-taking” has emerged (Schelling, 2008: 94). This contest of force—known better as a “limited war”—best captures the contemporary cross-Strait relationship given Beijing’s ability for heavy-handed military punishment rather than the actual application of force across the Strait (Schelling, 2008).² As will be discussed below, the objective from Beijing’s perspective is less to use kinetic force to achieve a political outcome than to utilise the increased risk of all-out war as a means of extracting greater concessions—or at minimum, decreasing recalcitrance—from Taipei regarding the task of reunification.

Core Premises Guiding Strategic Analysis

The premises of strategic theory, while remaining Clausewitzian in nature, have evolved to offer a coherent framework for investigating situations where actors are striving to secure their interests against those of other actors through a strategic increase in the *fear or risk* of war. Of these premises, there are three dominant themes of relevance to conducting strategic analysis of the cross-Strait relationship. First, as a theory of interdependent decision-making beset with the unknowns of a particular strategic environment, each actor exercises a degree of control over what the other wants (Smith & Stone, 2011: 29-30). The best course of action is dependent upon the other actor; the actors serve to benefit from compromise, exchange, and/or collaboration rather than inflexibility or dissociation. Strategic analysis thus becomes an endeavour of investigating the structure of incentives, information, communication, available choices, and employable tactics—the exogenous factors shaping a course of action—available to all parties in a specific situation. The focus of strategic analysis becomes the situations, rather than the actors who are assumed to be rational and capable of relating “means to ends as efficiently as possible” (Lopez-Alvez, 1989: 204).

² It is worth reminding ourselves of the difference between limited war, as in the Taiwan Strait, and actual war as can be seen in US-led coalitions across the Middle East in the post-9/11 era. The latter includes the use of overt military force, the actual firing of shots, and thus no longer involves the risk or potential of a “general war” between parties (Schelling, 1980: 191-192).

A second theme from the literature on strategic theory is the ongoing “game” of tacit and explicit bargaining inherent in international politics. Actors must be alert to *what* the other actor is expressing through chosen manoeuvres, and able to convey intentions and awareness of expectations—expectations which, in turn, set limits upon the risk of conflict (Schelling, 1980: 101). Throughout this game of bargaining, an actor’s choice to rely upon kinetic or non-kinetic tools contributes to a dynamic process of mutual accommodation which retains the safety net of the *status quo ante* at which the bargaining process began. Actions can alter the game through incurring costs, increasing risk, or even by reducing the range of subsequent choices.

Such actions are aided by the third theme, namely the skilled application of commitments, threats, and promises. Each must be calibrated to reflect expectations of interdependence, requiring an understanding of the beliefs, values, and interests maintained by the opponent, as well as knowledge “about [one’s] environment and the constraints on what [one] may choose” (Schelling, 1984: ix), which is necessary to match means with ends.³ The challenge for actors, however, is both maintaining sufficient resolve and the flexibility to decouple from threats or promises. Cheap words alone will prove insufficient in backing down—for if verbiage alone was adequate to undo an actor’s commitment, threat, or promise, then it was arguably a tactic of little value from the outset.

Taken in sum, the concept of limited war as emerging from the study of strategic theory involves interdependent decision-making, bargaining, and a mixture of threats, promises, and/or commitments. A limited war, such as can be seen in the Taiwan Strait, will be no less political in nature; yet, it will fall short of an absolute form of conflict given the constraints of tangible and intangible resources, colloquially known as the ways and means of strategy. Such a conceptualisation is, of course, not without its critics. Of greatest relevance is scholarship on strategic culture, which suggests different approaches to issues of war and peace due to unique cultural and/or historical backgrounds. Beginning first with work on Soviet strategic culture, this approach has since been re-applied time and again around the world (Snyder,

³ This entails an attention to cultural elements, existing behaviours and tactics, historical experience, ideological platforms, and/or an awareness to sources of motivation.

1977; Johnston, 1995; Booth & Trood, 1999; Echevarria, 2011). Chinese strategic culture is predominantly framed in terms of traditional military and defensive thought, often citing Confucius, Mencius, Mozi, Sun Tzu and other ancient scholars for their various contributions to contemporary Chinese strategy, be it interpersonal behaviours, the role of “non-offence”, or the importance of deception (Li, 1997; Sawyer, 2007; Kaufman & Mackenzie, 2009). Other framings of strategic culture tend to gravitate toward Han ethnocentrism, or a Chinese set of interests divergent from those of other rising powers (Pye, 1992; Johnson, 2009). Still others orient understandings of strategy within traditional theories of international relations—drawing upon the record of Chinese military texts and historical actions in mixing Confucian-Mencian paradigms with classical realism or *realpolitik* (Ford, 2016; Johnston, 1995; Scobell, 2009).

Unfortunately, all such approaches under the guise of “strategic culture” are highly problematic—and, at the cost of focusing on cultural variables thought to shape strategy, fail to constitute assertions of *what* strategy is. If these so-called Chinese-specific concepts are stripped of their affiliations to Chinese culture, it is hard to find anything remotely *just* Chinese about them. After all, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, and Clausewitz in different eras and geographies each stress the value of knowledge and deception, of bloodless victory, and of non-military methods to victory (Porter, 2007). Put simply, strategic culture is a logically and empirically problematic perspective on strategy that avoids analytical precision (Gray, 2014: 93-95). Rather than focusing on the ambiguities of defining culture and contriving correlation between cultural by-products and strategic behaviour, strategic theory engages with elements of traditional international relations theory while analysing the linkage between ideas, resources, and objectives.

The Evolution of China’s Strategic Tradition toward Taiwan

What strategic theory is poised to offer is an exacting method laden with purposeful assumptions for examining the logic of Chinese leadership in its manipulation of strategy to wage a limited war vis-à-vis Taiwan. Despite such analytical rigours, no scholars have explicitly employed this lens to cross-Strait

relations, opting for traditional realist, liberal, or constructivist frameworks instead. Entirely absent is scholarship that comprehensively ties the core premises of strategic theory to the contemporary cross-Strait relationship, and a focus on *strategy* and the policy themes it has translated into under Xi, rather than the policy guidance upon which Chinese strategy toward Taiwan is built. The remaining text seeks to fill this gap, offering an illustration and analysis of the comprehensive elements of strategic power employed by Beijing with the intention of increasing the risks—both perceived and actual—to Taiwan should it continue to impede (or deny) Beijing the ultimate objective of reunification.

Beijing's leaders are predisposed to reunify, a task that Xi himself has said cannot be passed on from generation to generation (Blanchard, 2013). Chinese leadership continues to pursue the long-held and widely touted goal of peaceful reunification in the form of "one country, two systems", despite changes to the strategic environment since 1949 (Tsang, 2016). On the opposite side of the Strait, a status quo of neither independence nor unification is the baseline from which Kuomintang or Democratic Progressive Party politicians shape their agenda.

Despite these divergent strategic trajectories, it is China's long sought goal of reunification and interest in not "losing" Taiwan that perpetuates its strategy toward the island. Of the tools available, there are four instruments in the Chinese strategic tradition that have consistently been applied in ties between Beijing and Taipei. In particular, there are the principles that have guided Beijing's views about sovereignty over Taiwan (the legal instrument), the CCP's mandate as executed by political leadership (the political instrument), the military strategy that has determined Chinese decisions on how to enforce sovereignty claims (the military instrument), and the strategic economic linkages across the Strait (the geoeconomic instrument). By focusing on these four instruments in China's strategic tradition toward Taiwan, this research can schematically analyse the evolution of themes within Chinese strategy that bear upon its progress toward national reunification. These concepts—and the policy themes they have translated into—can be understood as the foundation for Xi's own strategy toward Taiwan.

While each will be evaluated separately to maximise analytical depth, each instrument operates in close conjunction with other elements of Beijing's strategy. Collectively, the instruments offer a way of looking at Beijing's management of the Taiwan issue as a type of limited—and ongoing—war. For Xi, and his predecessors, these four instruments are intentionally manipulated below a threshold of overt military conflict to support the political objective of unifying the Chinese state. This synergy of ways, means, and ends forms part of an organic whole, known as strategy, and demarcates both progress and efficacy in attaining China's goal of reunification.

Legal Instrument: One Sovereign China (Not Two)

In the contemporary period, Chinese strategy encompasses a long tradition of interpreting and advancing legal norms which serve Beijing's political objectives. This can be seen across time and strategic environments, ranging from China's ascension to the United Nations, the International Court of Justice's opinion on Kosovo's independence, and UN peacekeeping operations in Macedonia, to issues on the Chinese periphery such as the reversion of Hong Kong and Macau, territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas, and—of concern herein—the Taiwan issue.⁴

The concept of sovereignty alone has merited tomes of rigorous scholarship (e.g., Krasner, 1999; deLisle, 2002; Chan, 2015). While beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that sovereignty as conceptualised in the Western, Westphalian sense was not native to China (Tok, 2013: 24). Instead, it entered China during the period of unequal treaties made between foreign powers and the Qing dynasty; it was subsequently adapted in conjunction with traditional

⁴ In each instance, Chinese government officials have argued on behalf of a vision of sovereignty that best suits Chinese interests. In discussions with US officials surrounding the PRC's ascension to the UN, for instance, "dual representation" was nixed for its invalidation of Chinese sovereignty (People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1971). At the ICJ, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was denounced by China on the premise that a part cannot retrospectively seek to be free from the whole (International Court of Justice, 2009). Sovereignty along the Chinese periphery has been largely based on history, be it legacies of the Hundred Years of Humiliation (i.e., Hong Kong/Macau) or historical access and use of the disputed territories (i.e., Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and South China Sea features).

notions of suzerainty manifested in the Chinese governing concept of *tianxia* 天下 (“all under heaven”). At the intersection of Westphalian and “Eastphalian” norms, sovereignty in the Chinese sense of the term is less about the hard boundaries of a state, falling instead between the power of governance and the right of a core sovereign power to claim territorial integrity (Coleman & Maogoto, 2013; Brown, 2016; Zheng, 2016). It is this concept that Beijing employs, both domestically and internationally, to assert its “one China” policy or principle and to entice or punish others in their support or hindrance of Beijing’s political objective of reunification. More specifically, it is this perception of sovereignty that has enabled Beijing to weaken international legal norms on sovereignty—insofar as its claims to Taiwan go unchallenged—and exert greater strategic influence over Taiwan.

Beijing’s use of the instrument of sovereignty in strategy toward Taiwan manifests in several forms, each of which is underpinned by an insistence, based upon United Nations Resolution 2758 (October 1971), that the PRC is the sole representative of China. Perhaps of greatest prominence is the impact “one China” has upon Taiwan’s international space, be it relations with diplomatic partners or participation in international organisations and non-governmental activities. More recently, the squeeze play to pressure an acceptance of “one China” *sans* different interpretations has trickled down to the level of Taiwanese citizens.⁵ This section will focus specifically on Taiwan and the UN, diplomatic partnerships, and Taiwanese abroad with the intention of highlighting how such tactics are thought to support progress toward reunification through a prevention of Taiwanese secession.

From 1993-2008, Taiwanese government officials actively lobbied their partners and allies to support bids for a place in the UN.⁶ Realising such efforts had yet to bear fruit, Ma Ying-jeou shifted to pursuing meaningful inclusion in UN-affiliated institutions and other international bodies (UN General Assembly,

⁵ The author’s qualification of Chinese pressure is based upon data from the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs which examines how China undermines relations with Taiwan’s diplomatic partners, prevents the development of substantive relationships, blocks participation in international organisations, suppresses NGO activities, undermines overseas Chinese work, and/or impedes civil society (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2016).

⁶ E.g., UN General Assembly (1998).

2008). It was, in many ways, a strategy that won appeasement from Beijing. Where Taiwan was willing to take a different name—usually “Chinese Taipei”—Beijing did not feel it was losing recognition of its *de jure* sovereignty as “one China” at the international level. Instances where Taiwan could be construed as a separate entity (à la “one China, one Taiwan”) were, expectedly, met with resistance. In 2016 alone, Taiwanese delegations were forced to leave an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) meeting in Brussels, a UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Committee on Fisheries conference in Rome, and denied an invitation to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) due to Chinese advocacy for restricting participation to *government officials* or an insistence on upholding Resolution 2758 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2016).

Regarding Taiwan’s diplomatic ties, in the Chen Shui-bian era of 2000-2008, nine of Taiwan’s partners severed ties with Taipei to recognise Beijing.⁷ A divisive issue often accompanied by geoeconomic carrots to incentivise normalisation of relations with the PRC, in one instance a prime minister was ousted amid a brief establishment of diplomatic ties with Taiwan (*BBC News*, 2004). The era of “chequebook diplomacy” ended with Ma Ying-jeou’s unilateral declaration in 2008, giving way to a largely stable period in Taiwan’s foreign relations (*Focus Taiwan News*, 2015). Despite the guilty plea of former Guatemalan president Alfonso Portillo to charges of accepting bribes in exchange for diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, it was only Gambia that severed ties with Taiwan during the Ma era (Villegas, 2014). Since Tsai Ing-wen took office in May 2016, not only has Gambia re-established relations with Beijing, but Taiwan has also lost its diplomatic links with São Tomé and Príncipe, and Panama. Additional pressure from the Nigerian government to relocate the existing Taiwan Trade Mission suggests the Chinese government is insisting that other countries ensure relations remain well within the bounds of Beijing’s interpretation of sovereign control and “one China” (Bax et al., 2017).

Arguably most troubling of all, Beijing’s averment of sovereignty has trickled down to the level of Taiwanese citizens. Taiwanese tourists in New York, for instance, are barred from visiting the UN headquarters. Sometime after May 19,

⁷ The countries which switched recognition: Macedonia, Liberia, Dominica, Vanuatu, Grenada, Senegal, Chad, Malawi, and Costa Rica.

2016, the United Nations switched its requirements for accessing the UN buildings from possessing “government-issued photo identification” to “government-issued photo identification *issued by a Member state or an Observer State* [emphasis added]”.⁸ Elsewhere, “one China” has determined the fate of suspected Taiwanese telecommunications fraudsters arrested overseas and deported to mainland China (not Taiwan) despite the existence of a cross-strait crime fighting agreement. As of early 2017, with over 220 deported Taiwanese still in China, it is easy to succumb to a narrative that Beijing is using the deportations to punish the Tsai Ing-wen administration. But reality is likely far more nuanced; each of the countries that have sent the Taiwanese to mainland China have followed the accepted norm of deportation whereby criminals are sent back to their city of embarkation. In many of these countries—Kenya, Cambodia, and Malaysia in particular—the governments stand to benefit economically from the continuation of a stable relationship with Beijing, thus increasing the likelihood of an aversion to actions *against* the “one China” policy. Ultimately, however, the deportation of Taiwanese criminals may simply be about justice: Beijing seeks more stringent punishment for actions that have claimed the bank accounts of countless Chinese citizens. From both cases, while a smoking gun is likely to remain beyond reach, it remains no less plausible that China was the culprit in creating the necessary pressures to bring the suspects to the mainland irrespective of their passports (Chung, 2016; Glaser, 2016; Huang, 2016a).

Aside from Taiwanese protestations, Beijing’s proclamations of sovereignty have largely gone unchallenged. Those that have advocated for an interpretation of “one China” which differs from Beijing’s have been threatened—literally—by the silencing of microphones or the expulsion from meetings (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2016). While this tactic rarely operates alone, it has been effective insofar as countries continue to complicity accept and uphold China’s definition of “one China”, *sans* separate interpretations, and avoid strategic decisions that would suggest a

⁸ See internet archives of the United Nations Visitor Centre Tickets webpage (<http://visit.un.org/content/tickets>). It is worth noting that, as of July 2017, while Taiwanese tourists can proffer “valid identity documents” to visit the UN Geneva Palais des Nations, the author’s sources have suggested that Taiwanese traveling in a private capacity are still denied entry regardless of documentation.

recognition otherwise. Sovereignty, in short, is a central element of strategy which enables China to play both softball and hardball. Beijing can opt to accommodate Taiwan's requests at the international level—as, usually, “Chinese Taipei”—when no threat to Beijing's *de jure* sovereign power exists; but, when Taiwan is seen to be seeking greater independence or a “two Chinas” world, Beijing will continue to squeeze Taiwan's ability to act, *de facto*, as a state.

Political Instrument: The Party's Mandate and Taiwan

It has become fashionable to debate how and whether statesmen shape policy. On one hand are those that argue in favour of statesmen, positing that international relations cannot be understood if the role of the individual is overlooked (Byman & Pollack, 2001: 145). A statesman-centric analysis in China—and, indeed it would be a statesman not stateswoman—would examine his rise through the Party ranks, personal background, and personality as underpinning strategy and policy.⁹ On the other hand are those that believe statesmen do not inherently matter, and that the impact of political leadership is a result of weighing opportunities and risks, rather than skill and expertise (Breuning, 2007: 32-36; Allison & Zelikow, 1999: 16-21). This is not too dissimilar from a rational actor model in suggesting that Chinese leadership weighs pros and cons in decision-making but may exercise proclivities toward certain behaviours given how its leaders have been socialised to view the world.

Chinese strategy toward Taiwan—a core national interest—has traditionally been spearheaded by the highest echelons of political power. But while the statesman is of explicit interest, such a task is made more difficult by the black box and secretive operations of Zhongnanhai that characterise Chinese decision-making circles. Fortunately, the task is less to discern how a leader has risen to power, or how he manipulates collective versus centralised leadership, and instead to examine the interaction between the leader and the political system. Contemporary Chinese leaders are privileged in their ability to control and operationalise ideology and political objectives; for the Taiwan issue, this

⁹ No woman has ever risen beyond the Politburo to the highest echelons of political power.

entails a “popularised awareness” of how leaders think about management of the cross-Strait relationship (Brady, 2015: 804; Brown, 2012a: 53).

To be certain, the priority given to Taiwan by generations of Chinese leadership has depended much on perceptions of the Taiwan issue, namely whether Taiwanese politicians are seen to encourage greater Taiwanese independence or seek closer cooperation across the Strait. Consistent across both time and generations of Chinese political leadership, however, is a grounding in the Party’s political mandate. Readily seen in the government work reports issued at annual *lianghui* 两会 meetings as representative of political consensus within the Party, each leader is explicitly tasked with the long-term objective of sustaining the right of China’s one-party system to govern a unified Chinese nation (Heath, 2014: 129).

Taking this existential political mandate as a core mission—and building on political capital in the form of a leader’s loyalty to the Party—has ultimately restricted the options available to Chinese leaders in shaping strategy toward Taiwan. Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin adamantly advocated on behalf of the task of reunification in their respective issuance of “six items” (*liutiao* 六条) and “eight points” (*badian* 八点).¹⁰ For both, and arguably continuing to present-day Beijing, the Taiwan issue is fundamentally an ideological one. Accompanying the obvious divide in political systems is that of competing national identities and nationalisms (Cole, 2017). In seeking to address the ideological gap, Deng and Jiang focused their efforts upon the path toward reunification in a manner that was mindful of the respective lifestyles and political systems emerging on each side.

Hu Jintao, by contrast, was much softer on Taiwan. While vocalising an immovability from the one-China principle and the necessity of progressing toward peaceful reunification, Beijing’s strategic stance was far more subdued under Hu than in past eras (Li, 2016). Readily attributed by some experts to a lack of supportive political allies—as Hu himself was a protégé of Deng Xiaoping—Taiwan instead became a high priority for Hu’s deputy, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao (Brown, 2012b). In a 2004 speech with the overseas

¹⁰ See *Xinhua* (2004) and *Renmin ribao* (1995).

Chinese community at the PRC Embassy in London, Wen expressed a need to “earnestly consider” (*renzhen kaolü* 认真考虑) enacting a unification law (*BBC Chinese*, 2004; Paal, 2016). Wen’s idea was ultimately inverted and formalised as the Anti-Secession Law of 2005, a notable development which suggests Beijing’s political objective at the time recognised the difficulties in reunifying, thus shifting to focus on preventing secession and separatism. In other words, it was a law that responded to perceived changes in Beijing’s strategic environment, but set a future precedent for the use of military force as a response to a Taiwanese declaration of independence (Huang, 2016b).

Xi Jinping has returned to a decisively hawkish posture on the Taiwan issue, emphasising that a final resolution cannot wait forever (Blanchard, 2013). While the gap in ideologies on both sides of the Taiwan Strait is no less prominent now than sixty years ago, of greater concern is the issue of sovereignty and the existence of one *de jure*, sovereign China. Working within the political mandate of the 18th Party Congress to “build a moderately prosperous society ... and achieve the renewal of the Chinese nation” (*Xinhua*, 2012), Xi’s Taiwan strategy will be successful if he can ensure a single-mindedness to uphold “one China” exists on both sides of the Strait.

The Party will continue to retain a preeminent place in Xi’s strategy toward Taiwan. Narratives or perspectives which run counter to the Party’s political objectives vis-à-vis Taipei will intentionally be restricted. What one will see in public messaging, particularly from the central government and Party apparatus, is a firm commitment to prevent Taiwanese independence with secondary calls to complete the “great task” (*daye* 大业) of reunification (Glaser, 2016; Huang, 2016b; Zheng, 2016). This is best seen in the non-negotiable one China principle—the notion that the “two sides belong to one China” (*liang’an tongshu yige Zhongguo* 两岸同属一个中国)—which serves as the foundation upon which cross-Strait relations are conducted.¹¹ Just as Xi cannot ignore the Party’s mandate and support China’s national rejuvenation, so too can he not back down or ease the political pressures Beijing has strategically—and

¹¹ The one China principle should not be confused with the one China policy, a widely-accepted recognition by other countries of Beijing’s stance that it is the sole legitimate representative of China, including Taiwan.

intentionally—imposed upon Taiwan as prerequisites for navigating the cross-Strait relationship.

Military Instrument: Waging War by Other Means

Mao Zedong famously pronounced that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun; and in China, it is the Communist Party that commands the gun. The role of the military instrument in Beijing's strategic tradition toward Taiwan is shaped by strategic concepts, doctrine, and capabilities and the reality that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a loyal servant of the Party and its General Secretary, not the Chinese state or the Chinese people. It is the interests and involvement of the PLA that have defined the oscillation between pacifism and realism in a deterrence strategy that has yet to yield a final resolution of the Taiwan issue.

The ability to deter through military might is complemented by the comparatively softer tactics of compellence manifested in the PLA's political work efforts toward Taiwan—a quasi-schizophrenic tradition that has emerged in Beijing's use of the military instrument. Deterrence (*weishe* 威懾) in the Chinese mind effectively combines Thomas Schelling's oft-referenced definitions of deterrence and compellence (Cheng, 2011: 92; Kissinger, 2012: 133). Taken in combination, the two tactics offer Beijing a means for deterring Taiwan from any steps that would alter its sovereign status as a part of China, and compelling the island slowly toward the goal of reunification. The same combination of tactics target the United States, which Beijing seeks to keep from supporting Taipei through the development of military capabilities or involvement in a future cross-Strait contingency (Chan, 2004).

The military component of Beijing's strategy toward Taiwan cannot be separated from domestic politics and the demands upon the PLA as the armed wing of the Communist Party. While the PLA's mission set has broadened amid modernisation, a responsibility for handling the Taiwan issue will always remain the PLA's "sacred responsibility"—a reality unlikely to change as long as reunification and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the CCP's dominant priority (Information Office of the State Council, 2004). Given the pace of PLA

modernisation, it is tempting to believe that the Chinese military has long since achieved preponderance over Taiwan. The emergence of advanced, disruptive technology—including short-range missiles, fifth-generation fighters, and nuclear-powered attack submarines—presents a persuasive security dilemma narrative across the Strait. As Beijing’s security and military capabilities continue to increase, many Taiwanese see their own increased vulnerability and inadequate defences (Chang, 2016).

But high tech platforms alone do not translate into an ability to fight and win wars. Underpinning the warfighting performance of today’s PLA are the doctrines and exercises that offer a sense of how leadership in Beijing envisions a future cross-Strait conflict. The PLA’s ability to prepare for such a conflict is determined primarily by guidance from the Central Military Commission (CMC). Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the CMC has issued three iterations of strategic guidelines (*zhanlüe fangzhen* 战略方针) to shape the principles, development, and application of Chinese military power (Zheng, 2016). The guidelines have evolved from Mao-era People’s War to “active defence” and a prioritisation of “winning informationised [networked] local wars”, a reflection of the development of institutional and operational capacities to pursue and protect Beijing’s strategic objectives (Finkelstein, 2007: 71).

However, while the existence of strategic guidelines illuminates how the PLA *thinks* about military readiness and preparation, it offers little for understanding the actual capabilities of today’s PLA. Absent a “Grenada-like scenario” that offers analysts a sense of how adept the PLA is at joint operations and warfare, much will continue to remain unknown about the application of military force in the Taiwan Strait (Cheng, 2016). What is clear, however, is that the PLA’s procurement and training on disruptive platforms serves as an essential deterrent—a tactic that allows Beijing to manage the threshold at which conflict would break out in the Strait, and the limits in which such conflict could be constrained.

As mentioned above, the other element of Chinese deterrence is a far subtler form of compellence. In 2003, the Central Military Commission declared political work as an essential task of the PLA, including a responsibility to conduct campaigns of public opinion warfare (*yulun zhan* 舆论战), psychological

(*xinli zhan* 心理战), and legal warfare (*falü zhan* 法律战) (*CPC News*, 5 December 2013; Wu & Liu, 2014). Collectively known as the “Three Warfares” (*san zhan* 三战), these campaigns seek to degrade Beijing’s opponent—Taipei—in gradual efforts to create perceptions favourable to China’s strategic objectives (Zhang, 2006: 212). The military instrument is of particular utility toward Taiwan insofar as the PLA can use its people, platforms, and exercises to strengthen Taiwanese perception of China’s military strength and weaken its will to fight. This can be seen, for instance, in the increasingly hawkish rhetoric of retired PLA officers. While not representative of the entire military apparatus, commentary that likens Taiwan to “a fish swimming at the bottom of a pot” (*fudi youyu* 釜底游鱼) is widely disseminated across Chinese news outlets and social media, strengthening a sense of national confidence and resolve in pursuing Beijing’s reunification agenda (Dai, 2016). Periodic exchanges between retired PLA officers and their Taiwanese counterparts takes a slightly different tack to easing tensions, fostering common interests, and nurturing ties to bind the Strait closer together (e.g., *Taipei Times*, 12 November 2016b). The greatest threat, however, lies in the psychological impact of Chinese military might: the omnipresent threat of 1,000 missiles capable of raining down on Taiwan or the joint training exercises which showcase an ability to launch an amphibious attack and island invasion (*Nanfang ribao*, 17 September 2012; US Department of Defence, 2016: 109).

The military instrument in contemporary Chinese strategy toward Taiwan is far more than the application of overt military force. Aware of the accompanying costs, Beijing has shifted instead to rely upon the PLA as part of a calibrated political warfare campaign. It has succeeded in deterring Taiwan from further steps toward independence—and, in many ways, deterring the US from any actions that would strengthen its commitment to Taiwan beyond the Taiwan Relations Act.¹² Looking toward the future, the task for Beijing entails integrating modern weapons with a leaner, meaner professional fighting force that is capable and competent in manipulating risk without creating an all-out war.

¹² Under the Taiwan Relations Act (1979), the United States is committed to, for instance, providing Taiwan with arms of a defensive character. Involvement in a cross-Strait contingency is intentionally vague.

Geoeconomic Instrument: The Power of Beijing's Purse Strings

The breakneck economic growth of the last several decades has left China well positioned to turn to its wallet, rather than its weaponry, in pursuit of strategic objectives. Geoeconomic tools—the intentional use of economic instruments in pursuit of geopolitical ends—are more than just trade for trade's sake in Chinese strategy toward Taiwan, enabling Beijing to focus on consolidating its own economic strength as a means of projecting power and influencing (as opposed to coercing) Taiwan toward reunification (Norris, 2016).

Beijing's geoeconomic strategy toward Taiwan has, over the years, reflected several immediate and long-term priorities. First, and not too dissimilar from ensuring the PLA's own modernisation serves developmental goals, is the need to bolster China's domestic economic growth and modernisation. Nowhere are these interests clearer than in Xi's focus on reaching "two centennials": becoming a moderately well-off society (*xiaokang shehui* 小康社会) by 2020, around the Party's centennial, and a fully developed socialist nation (*shehuizhuyi xiandaihua guojia* 社会主义现代化国家) by 2050, to coincide with the centennial of the PRC's founding (Xi, 2014). The paramount importance of reunification is, notably, something for which leadership in Beijing may be willing to risk economic development (Li, 2016). A second priority of Beijing's geoeconomic strategy toward Taiwan can be seen in its ability to use economic levers to woo other countries away from supporting or recognising Taiwan through the "one China policy" discussed above. Third, geoeconomic tools are used by Beijing in a strategic carrot-and-stick combination, exploiting Taiwan's need to liberalise to stay competitive, avoid marginalisation, and maintain access to Chinese markets and the global supply chain (Chen, 2013: 406).

Under Xi, after Tsai failed to explicitly accept the 1992 Consensus in her inaugural address, Chinese leadership sought to increase pressure upon the Taiwanese tourism industry—a source of vulnerability for a sector that has fundamentally restructured itself around the demand of Chinese tourists (*Da*

jiyuan, 2015; Blanchard & Hung, 2016).¹³ Known colloquially as *yi tiao long* — 一条龙 (or “one dragon”), the Taiwanese tourism sector began to receive mainland tourists *en masse* from 2002. Travel agencies attract Chinese group tours with at-cost or low-cost fees and attempt to turn a profit by taking the groups to hotels, restaurants, and shops to accrue commission (Taipei Times, 13 September 2016a). Money spent on the island does not go directly into Taiwanese pockets, however, as an increasing number of tourist services are owned by Hong Kong and Chinese investors.

Given the problematic structure of Taiwan’s China-oriented tourism sector, the island is particularly vulnerable to the ebbs and flows of tourist numbers. Those businesses designed to take advantage of the growth in Chinese tourist groups are first to suffer when numbers decline.¹⁴ Initially, it appeared that China’s tourism quotas were slow to take effect. Chinese tourist agencies were directed by the central government to decrease the availability of Taiwan travel permits; websites froze offerings of Taiwan packaged tours (Glaser, 2016). But the reality—as seen in data on “tourist categories 1-3” from Taiwan’s National Immigration Agency (NIA) in table 1 below—is that group tourism to Taiwan began to decline from 2013.¹⁵ This shift can be attributed to a series of factors, including less favourable exchange rates, slower Chinese economic growth, the ease of traveling to Taiwan independently, and/or the desire to travel elsewhere in the world.¹⁶ Somewhat more perplexingly, even as group tourists began to decline, individual travel began a steady increase through 2015—suggesting that more Chinese were finding their way to Taiwan via Hong Kong or other transit points. At the end of 2016, with Beijing’s travel quotas in place, total Chinese entries have declined 20 percent year-on-year, a not insignificant

¹³ In 2016, tourism directly and indirectly contributed five percent (US\$26.6 billion) of Taiwan’s total gross domestic product (GDP) and approximately 669,500 jobs, or roughly 5.9 percent of total employment (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017).

¹⁴ Given the focus on the mainland Chinese tourist market, the ability of travel agencies to attract tourists from elsewhere in the region has atrophied.

¹⁵ Author compilation of National Immigration Agency, Taiwan (ROC) December 2016 Statistics, available at: www.immigration.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=1325434&ctNode=29699&mp=1 (accessed 1.21.2017).

¹⁶ For example, the Renminbi-New Taiwan Dollar exchange rate has seen a gradual decline since mid-2015; Chinese tourist numbers to the US, Australia/New Zealand, and Great Britain have continued a steady climb since 2001.

number but one that suggests the bite to Chinese geoeconomic damage is not yet as bad as the bark.¹⁷

Table 1: Chinese Travel to Taiwan

Year	Tourist categories 1-3	Individual travel	Total Chinese entries
2001	-	-	26,669
2002	2,151	-	41,846
2003	12,768	-	39,427
2004	19,150	-	29,016
2005	54,162	-	102,737
2006	98,548	-	181,994
2007	81,903	-	182,777
2008	90,035	-	177,344
2009	601,754	-	858,698
2010	1,188,929	-	1,588,876
2011	1,286,574	30,281	1,748,940
2012	2,001,941	191,148	2,667,298
2013	2,263,476	522,443	3,266,113
2014	2,141,727	1,186,497	3,869,655
2015	2,001,105	1,334,818	3,925,464
2016	1,427,452	1,308,601	3,107,689

What emerges from the priorities delineated through Beijing’s use of the geoeconomic instrument toward Taiwan—as seen in the case of the tourism sector—is an interaction between power and interdependence that utilises Taiwan’s vulnerabilities to punish actions which are seen by Beijing as counter to its political agenda (Keohane & Nye, 2012: 7-10). Going forward, if the 1992 Consensus is explicitly accepted by Tsai, one could expect the “carrot” of full

¹⁷ According to November 2016 data from the Tourism Bureau (ROC), the total number of visitors to Taiwan declined year-on-year by 5.14 percent. While mainland Chinese tourists dipped in number, visitors from Japan, the United States, Southeast Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Europe, Korea and elsewhere increased (Tourism Bureau, November 2016).

tourist outflows to be resumed. Until such circumstances materialise, the structure of Taiwan's tourism industry and dependency upon mainland tourists will continue to expose the island to Beijing's geoeconomic manipulation.

Conclusion

Contemporary Chinese strategy toward Taiwan takes a nuanced, multi-faceted approach that has shifted from a primary focus on securing reunification to preventing independence. An examination of the four elements of Beijing's strategic tradition—legal, political, military, and geoeconomic—highlights the reality that the decisions Chinese leaders make on the Taiwan issue often have strong historical precedents. But this should, by no means, suggest that there is a one-size-fits-all approach for Xi to modify and apply to the cross-Strait political separation. Nor should such analysis suggest that, given the absence of reunification, Beijing should embark on a military invasion and occupation to solve the Taiwan problem once and for all. Rather, what is clear from the analysis of each instrument of the Chinese strategic tradition is just how much each instrument depends on the success of the others to shape strategy capable of attaining Beijing's political objectives.

Returning to the research question—how Xi's strategy is striving to attain the objective of reunification and why it has been unsuccessful—the task of this article has been an explicit examination of the interaction between ways, means, and ends. It has sought to assess how an actor—China—defines, articulates, and employs strategy toward Taiwan. Through the application and manipulation of four instruments of statecraft, Beijing has succeeded in maintaining a threshold in its relations with Taipei just below the level of overt conflict. The existence of a "limited war", as Schelling and strategic theorists would so deem, creates several disadvantages (and few advantages) in the overall thrust of China's strategy toward Taiwan.

While Beijing's preponderance of comprehensive national power appears to give it an upper hand in bargaining with Taipei, the legal and political tools are far too constrained to allow for much room to bargain. A conceptualisation of sovereignty confined to "one China" on Beijing's terms will preclude anything

short of Taiwan's eventual unification. In the political sphere, a Chinese leader will simply be unable to abandon the narrative of Taiwan's inseparable place in Chinese territory without shaking the entire foundation of the Party's political authority. Similarly, promises and threats to exact military or geoeconomic punishment upon Taiwan cannot be rescinded by Beijing without incurring political costs and a loss of legitimacy.

As one looks toward the future, where Chinese strategy has and will continue to fall short is in its ability to adapt to the interdependencies of cross-Strait relations. Xi and his predecessors have resolutely conveyed Beijing's intentions and expectations of their counterparts in Taiwan; but none have displayed adequate receptivity to Taiwanese strategic signalling. What appears to be strategy is but a one-way conversation with a stronger China setting the terms and conditions. Absent a flexible, sophisticated strategy, what will remain of China's approach to Taiwan is a series of policy initiatives—encapsulated in the four tools studied herein—that will continue to deter Taiwanese independence, deny Taiwan status as a *de facto* state, and incentivise closer cross-Strait cooperation as a path to reunification. Above all, China's strategic approach to Taiwan will continue to remain ambiguous, operating in a zone of limited war, shy of overt conflict but susceptible to Beijing's abilities to ratchet up or dial down pressures in a manner that best suits its political objectives.

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Lauren Dickey is a PhD candidate in War Studies at King’s College London and the National University of Singapore.

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Leaning to the Left: The Post-War Political Reorganisation of Chinese Women Activists within the CCP United Front Framework (1945-1949)

Vivienne Xiangwei Guo

University of Exeter

Abstract

The political transformation and reconstruction in China after the Second World War was marked by the Communist Party's successful implementation of the united front framework (tongyi zhanxian 统一战线) in the Kuomintang-controlled areas, in order to form a political coalition against the Kuomintang regime and to found a "new China" in 1949. Chinese women activists, who had established a variety of resistance organisations and built connections with different political parties and groups during the War of Resistance (1937-1945), also engaged in this framework and eventually leaned to the political left. By investigating the political reorganisation of Chinese women activists within the united front framework in different Kuomintang-held urban sites, this article aims to deepen the understanding of women's political roles and goals in their engagement with the Communist Party for the post-war national reconstruction, and to reveal the complexities of the process of their "leaning to the left".

Keywords: *Chinese women activists, China Women's Association, the CCP united front framework, post-war political reconstruction, the Chinese civil war.*

On 13th February 1945, about half a year before Japan's surrender and the end of the Second World War, the *New China Daily* (*Xinhua ribao* 新华日报), the organ of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), published a "statement of women in Chongqing on the current political situation", made on behalf of Chinese women who had contributed to the national resistance against Japan, and who expected to tackle the prolonged national crisis that was due to Japanese aggression as well as the dissatisfactory performance of the Nationalist government. The statement explains that:

One of the main causes of today's crisis is the lack of political democracy. Since there is no political democracy, people have no right to participate in national affairs, real talents have no opportunity to contribute to the government, while human and material resources cannot be mobilised for national resistance, and different political parties and factions cannot unite under the government to contribute their ideas ... The central government has promised to convoke the National Assembly, to terminate political tutelage and to implement constitutional governance as soon as the war finishes. Therefore, we urge the government to immediately invite different parties and groups to discuss national affairs together, to reach a consensus with people, to return the freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and of association to people. In today's movements for democracy and national resistance, we women must make a great effort and participate in different kinds of work, so as to achieve "national resistance and reconstruction" (*kangzhan jianguo* 抗战建国) ("Chongqing funü dui shiju de zhuzhang", [1945] 1991: 840-842).

This statement, signed by 104 women activists on Chinese New Year's Day in 1945, later became the founding statement of the China Women's Association (*Zhongguo funü lianyihui* 中国妇女联谊会, hereafter the CWA). Affiliated with the CCP South Bureau in Chongqing, the CWA consisted of women activists from a variety of women's organisations and groups, with their political affiliations ranging from the CCP and the Kuomintang (or the Nationalist Party, hereafter the KMT), to minor political parties and groups such as the Democratic League, and non-partisans (*Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu*, 1986: 386-387). As the founding statement stresses, the CWA was born as a women's movement both for national resistance and for post-war political reform and reconstruction. Although the kind of democratic political system that was desired by its members remains unclear in this statement, the founding of the CWA with the support of the CCP South Bureau, to a large extent, shows the integration of Chinese women activists in Chongqing as a civil opposition against KMT political

tutelage, and their political alliance with the CCP to advocate political pluralism and women's political participation.

However, the CWA was not the only women's organisation active in the KMT-controlled areas during the War of Resistance (1937-1945); nor was the CCP the only political choice for women activists to achieve their goals for national resistance and reconstruction. Emphasising the political initiatives and diverse affiliations maintained by women activists in the KMT-controlled areas, this research aims to draw scholarly attention away from the more thoroughly researched CCP "women's work" (*funü gongzuo* 妇女工作) in communist base areas, and to contribute to the understanding of the CCP's subtle approach to women political leaders and activists in the KMT-controlled areas. Elisabeth Croll (2013: 185-222) argues that in the base areas the CCP criticised the "narrow feminist standpoint" of the "liberated women intellectuals" such as Ding Ling on the one hand, and tightened its grip on women's participation in rural production on the other. Tani Barlow (2004: 190-252) points out that the Party's approach towards these "liberated women intellectuals" in Yan'an was actually a sophisticated one; instead of simply making them a target of criticism, Mao was more interested in transforming them into "ideological intellectuals" who could further the Maoist institutionalisation of culture.

If the CCP's handling of "women's work" in its own base areas was far from static or dogmatic, what about its political interactions with the majority of women activists who moved to the KMT-run free China during the war, and who had wider choices for fulfilling their political ambitions and achieving their political goals? The CCP's adoption of the "New Democracy" policy and its advocacy for an alliance among all political parties and forces against the ruling KMT has been briefly discussed by Levine and Pantsov (2013: 354-358), but it is mainly Party ideology and theory that concerns the authors—little has been said about how this policy was implemented and received among the population outside of the communist base areas (Lary, 2015: 12). This research, therefore, demonstrates that the CCP's artful application of the united front framework in KMT-held cosmopolitan urban sites was extremely important for the Party in enhancing its political influence and legitimacy among the more sophisticated urban populations, including the aforementioned women activists.

Despite criticising the women's movement led by those elite women activists in the KMT-controlled areas as "bourgeois feminism" (*zichan jieji funü yundong* 资产阶级妇女运动), during the wartime period the Communist Party, apart from stressing the importance of mobilising female workers and peasants for political support, did not articulate a distinct agenda for "proletarian feminism" (*wuchan jieji funü yundong* 无产阶级妇女运动) ("Funü yundong jueyi", [1928] 1991: 430-440, "Zhonggong zhongyang fuwei guanyu muqian funü yundong de fangzhen he renwu de zhishixin", [1939] 1991: 31-42).¹ Neither did the Party, as this article will show, draw a clear line between so-called bourgeois feminists and communist women activists. On the contrary, it adopted the same political language of "national resistance and reconstruction" as the KMT, and shared the political enthusiasm of women leaders active in the KMT-controlled areas for realising peace, constitutional governance and democracy, as well as women's political representation. Therefore, against the backdrop of the United Front for Resistance, it is the more inclusive discourses of "nation", rather than those of "class", that contextualised the wartime women's movement in general.

As Gail Hershatter (2007: 94) points out, during China's extended wars in the 1930s and 1940s, Chinese women's political movements and activities were far from being scarce or lacking diversity. She argues that feminists in this period did not remove themselves from politics in spite of lukewarm or hostile responses on the part of the ruling KMT, nor did they wait to have rights handed to them by a benevolent government. As a matter of fact, the war saw more middle-class women involved in war-related welfare work, and more young women attracted to feminism. Diana Lary (2010: 92-110) also argues that the war brought opportunities for women to lead public lives and engage in national politics. With respect to women's political activities in the KMT-controlled areas, Louise Edwards (2006: 6) highlights women's continuous political activism in promulgating the Double Fifth Draft Constitution of 1936 and realising constitutional governance along with women's suffrage, despite the instability

¹ The CCP stated in the "Resolution on the Women's Movement" in 1928 that women's final emancipation could only be achieved through the nation's liberation under the leadership of the proletariat. But apart from the Party's focus on female workers and peasants, its call for equal social and political rights during the War was not significantly different from that of the so-called bourgeois feminists in the KMT-controlled areas.

of the political and military situation in China in the late 1930s and 1940s.² Li Danke (2010: 9) agrees with Edwards that women's lives were dramatically changed by the war, but more importantly, women were also changing the political landscape of China. Based on the oral accounts of her interviewees, Li (2010: 133) argues that the war mobilisation provided opportunities for traditionally marginalised political groups, such as women and middle-ground organisations, to step into the political spotlight and have a voice in China's wartime politics, and that the wartime mobilisation tolerated relative political pluralism.

The expansion of the KMT's "New Life Movement" Women's Advisory Council (WAC) in Wuhan in 1938 demonstrates the enlarging political space for women's participation in wartime national politics and signifies the political pluralism tolerated by the KMT at the beginning of the war. Xia Rong's (2010: 122-124) research on the WAC provides detailed information on the active communication and cooperation among the WAC members recruited by Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Song Meiling) to work under the anti-Japanese United Front. These women leaders and activists hailed from different political parties and groups, including the KMT, the CCP, the National Salvation Association and, later, the Democratic League. Focusing on the same women's organisation, Helen Schneider (2012: 215) points out that women activists in the WAC were, like their male peers, "literate and hence had cultural power, and they saw themselves as more civilisationally advanced and necessarily involved in the struggle over culture and political development." And more importantly, as Schneider (2012: 219) argues, these women activists believed that their resistance and reconstruction efforts would assure them political and social leadership roles in the post-war period.

Under the anti-Japanese United Front, the aforementioned political parties and groups, including the CCP, urged the KMT to terminate its political tutelage and fully promulgate the constitution, propelling a vigorous constitutional movement which engaged not only male political leaders but also women activists (Xia, 2010: 244-249). Growing pressure from the political opposition led

² Chinese women gained equal suffrage rights with men in 1936 with the passage of the May Fifth Draft Constitution, or the Double Fifth Draft Constitution, under the Nationalist government. But this constitution was not fully promulgated due to the War of Resistance.

Chiang Kai-shek to establish the People's Political Council as a political institution that summoned councils of delegates to discuss national issues and supervised the promulgation of the constitution. Functioning as a "wartime parliament" under the regime of Chiang Kai-shek, the People's Political Council included all political parties and groups, as well as non-partisans, in the discussion of national affairs, and also provided women activists with a platform to circulate their political ideas and networks (Edwards, 2008: 193). Amongst the 200 members of the first council, 10 were women activists. While the majority of them were selected from the KMT Central Women's Movement Committee, all of the non-KMT women members, namely Shi Liang, Liu-Wang Liming, Deng Yingchao and Wu Yifang were unexceptionally affiliated with the WAC and the Democratic League (*Guomin canzhenghui shiliao bianzuan weiyuanhui*, 1962: 9-10).

The Democratic League, like the WAC, formed another political "middle-ground" between the competing KMT and CCP for women's political engagement both during and after the War of Resistance. Established in 1941 and restructured in 1944, the Democratic League was actually an umbrella organisation comprised of six minor political parties and groups, namely the Youth Party, the National Socialist Party, the Third Party, the Rural Reconstruction Association, the Vocational Education Society and the National Salvation Association (Fung, 2000: 146). During the War of Resistance, seeking political shelter under a major party was neither an automatic, nor the only, choice for promoting women's movements. Many women activists chose to join the Democratic League while maintaining a neutral position between the KMT and the CCP. The Women's Committee of the Sino-Soviet Cultural Association (hereafter SSCA Women's Committee), for example, was in fact led by a group of women leaders affiliated with the Democratic League in Chongqing (*Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu*, 1986: 310). This research shows that although they were subjected to the political centralisation and persecution conducted by the KMT in the immediate post-war period, these women activists still endeavoured to maintain their political autonomy and spontaneous activism outside of any party-state structure.

Within this relatively liberal political milieu engendered by mass mobilisation for national resistance, Chinese women activists gradually enhanced their

political positions and connections, and voiced their political goals. Following the retreat of the Nationalist government from Wuhan to the wartime capital Chongqing in 1938, they also revamped their organisations to sustain the diversity and flexibility in their political engagement.³ Political connections and cooperation were rapidly built among women's organisations and groups, most notably the WAC led by Madame Chiang and Shi Liang, a famous female lawyer and leader of the Democratic League; the SSCA women's committee led by Li Dequan, the leader of the Democratic League and wife of the KMT general Feng Yuxiang; the Chongqing Women's Service Group for Refugees led by Ni Feijun, a non-aligned activist and wife of the mayor of Chongqing; and the *Modern Women* (*Xiandai funü* 现代妇女) magazine edited by Cao Mengjun, who was also leader of the Democratic League and wife of the KMT official Wang Kunlun. Until the establishment of the China Women's Association in 1945, the only women's organisation under direct leadership of the Communist Party was a women's committee attached to the CCP South Bureau, led by communist women leaders Deng Yingchao and Zhang Xiaomei (Chongqing Municipal Archives, n.d.; Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu, 1986: 309, 315, 483-484).

Given the diverse affiliations maintained by Chinese women activists through to the mid-1940s, which ranged a spectrum of political institutions and positions, it would not have been easy for the CCP to penetrate women's organisations and networks in the KMT-controlled areas by the end of the war, and consequently dominate the women's movement by 1949. Yet as Wang Zheng correctly puts it, the founding of the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) in 1949 signalled the successful conclusion of the CCP's institutionalisation of the women's movement, and also marked the closing of the space for the spontaneous activism of Chinese women that had been witnessed during the war (Wang, 1997: 133; Wang, 1999: 143).

Very little research, however, has been conducted to explain this seemingly sudden "closing of space" for women's spontaneous activism and the presumably abrupt transition in the women's movement in the immediate post-war period. If the CCP South Bureau was merely one of the institutions that had provided a platform in support of women's political activism in Chongqing, why

³ Regarding wartime migration to Wuhan and later to Chongqing, please see MacKinnon (2008).

in 1945, as shown at the beginning of this article, did the 104 prominent women leaders favourably respond to the CCP's advocacy of post-war national reconstruction, and join the CWA with the backing of the Bureau? And why did they eventually coalesce their organisations into the ACWF in 1949?

Chinese women activists' political reorganisation in favour of the CCP was clearly not a sudden action enabled by the CCP's consolidated power in 1949. This article will analyse their political integration into the CWA in 1945 in Chongqing, and later into its much more famous successor, the ACWF, in 1949 in Beijing. Through this analysis, I attempt to argue that Chinese women activists' political engagement and accommodation with the CCP was a gradual process through the entire course of the war, but which accelerated in the immediate post-war years for the following two reasons: first, the space for women's spontaneous political activism and independent organisation rapidly shrank under the dispiriting political and economic conditions of KMT-controlled urban sites, and the choices became increasingly limited for women activists seeking to maintain their political position and participation during the ensuing KMT-CCP civil war (1946-1949). More importantly, the CCP united front framework provided them with ideological and institutional support for continuously pursuing political pluralism and democracy in the post-war national reconstruction. As a result, it was inevitable that Chinese women activists would "lean to the left".

However, it is important to point out that the political reorganisation of women activists in favour of the CCP in the late 1940s does not indicate their personal loyalty to the Party, and that their integration into the ACWF was a fragmented process. This article will draw attention to the complex political roles and goals of these women activists in their engagement with the CCP's united front framework by answering the following questions: how and why did women activists in the KMT-controlled areas, despite their diverse political affiliations and bourgeois background, build connections with the CCP South Bureau by the end of the war? Why did their political positions change during the civil war? And what did they expect to achieve through participating in the CWA and later in the ACWF?

The CCP South Bureau and the United Front Framework for Women Activists

Originating in the KMT-CCP anti-Japanese United Front and developing to become a theoretical and institutional structure aimed at winning over the hearts and minds of the hesitating masses and undermining the popularity of the KMT, the CCP united front framework enhanced popular support for the Communist Party and strengthened its legitimacy both during and after the War of Resistance (Barabantseva, 2010: 42). Challenging the view that the United Front was forced on the CCP by external circumstances, in particular the Comintern directives, Van Slyke (1967: 49, 186) believed that it was the CCP's own decision to continue to use the strategy during the war years. Importantly, the united front framework did not fail after the New Fourth Army Incident in 1941. As Kui-Kwong Shum (1988: 147) argues, "the escalation of clashes between the KMT and the CCP actually propelled the CCP to adhere more closely to the united front in order to oppose its opponents." The CCP United Front Department (*tongzhan bu* 统战部), created by 1938, was attached directly to the Party apparatus, while the "New Democracy" policy was instituted to make theoretical preparations for the Party's further implementation of the united front framework in the post-war period. Mao (1940) published his famous article "On New Democracy" in Yan'an in 1940, which articulated the CCP's tasks and goals in building a new Chinese democratic republic. Distinguished both from the "old republics" controlled by capitalist classes in the West, and from the dictatorship of the proletariat thriving in the Soviet Union, the "new Chinese democratic republic" was perceived as a coalition regime ruled by all revolutionary classes. By undermining a radical, and class-based, party line, the enforcement of "New Democracy" policy and the implementation of the united front framework in the 1940s were, as Van Slyke (1967: 112, 117) puts it, "both a bid for support (away from the KMT) and a statement of the kind of multi-class coalition regime that the CCP desires to lead and to expand."

In January 1939, the CCP South Bureau was officially established in Chongqing. Directly led by the renowned party leader Zhou Enlai, the South Bureau supervised the development of the united front framework in the KMT-controlled south, and south-west China (Li, 2009: 10, 28). A women's committee was immediately formed under the South Bureau, led by Zhou's wife Deng

Yingchao, which was responsible for strengthening political ties with women activists of other political parties and groups in Chongqing, and integrating them into the united front framework. While the KMT tightened central political control over women's organisations and pressured local women activists into serving the political purposes of the party, the CCP united front framework, as will be demonstrated in this section, in contrast sustained the diversity and flexibility of women's political engagement and therefore provided women activists in the KMT-controlled areas with an appealing alternative.

After the New Fourth Army Incident in 1941, the relative political pluralism that had been tolerated by the KMT at the beginning of the war was in decline as the clashes between the KMT and the CCP escalated.⁴ In Chongqing, as well as in other unoccupied cities, the KMT hastened to recruit female members from local schools and universities, and frequently intervened in activities organised by non-KMT women's organisations. From 1944 onwards, orders were sent from the KMT Central Organisation Department to local KMT Women's Movement Committees, stressing the importance of increasing the percentage of female KMT party members to 25% (Yunnan Provincial Archives, 1944 and 1945). Local police and secret agents also conducted strict surveillance on the activities of non-KMT women's organisations.

Although the above-mentioned SSCA Women's Committee was comprised of members mostly from the Democratic League, the KMT and non-aligned activists rather than from the CCP, it still became one of the victims of police surveillance in Chongqing. When Jin Zhonghua, the chief editor of the magazine *World Knowledge* (*Shijie zhishi* 世界知识), came to give a talk at the SSCA Women's Committee, the event was interrupted by the local police. According to the report filed by the Chongqing Municipal Police, two police officers had been sent to the meeting venue to cancel the talk only half an hour before it started. The vice chair of the Committee came forward to stop the officers, arguing that Mr. Jin's talk—"From Crimea to San Francisco"—was purely on current international affairs, and more importantly, the wives of high-ranking

⁴ The New Fourth Army Incident, also known as the Wannan Incident, happened in January 1941. The superior KMT forces surrounded and destroyed a column of 10,000 troops from the CCP-led New Fourth Army under Ye Ting and Xiang Ying near Maolin. For more information, please see Benton (1999).

KMT officials, including the mayor's wife Ni Feijun, would be present. Afraid of irritating any VIPs, the two officers only audited the talk and then submitted a report to the Chongqing Municipal Police (Chongqing Municipal Archives, 1945: 109).

Not only in Chongqing, the political centre of free China during the war, but also in comparatively peripheral areas such as Kunming, the KMT attempted to dominate local women's political organisations and activism. Towards the end of the war, letters from the KMT Central Organisation Department arrived in Kunming, pressuring local KMT women's organisations to recruit members from among school students and career women (Yunnan Provincial Archives, 1944 and 1945). The KMT Three Principles of the People Youth Corp was also active on campus, ensuring that all board members of local girls' schools were selected by the KMT, and coercing all female students to join the party (Liang & Zeng, 1983: 58-62). Under political pressure, KMT women's organisations had no choice but to curb the activities of other political parties, in particular the CCP, within local women's communities (Li, 1983: 12-13).

However, the strict political control and police surveillance exercised by the KMT failed to impede the CCP's development of networks among women's organisations in the KMT-controlled areas, which was carried on secretly or "underground" through to the end of the war. According to Yang Hansheng's memoir, over one third of SSCA members in Chongqing became undercover communists who kept one-way communication with the leaders of the CCP South Bureau (Xiong, 2012: 49). Women activists working at the aforementioned organisations, such as the WAC, the SSCA Women's Committee, the Chongqing Women's Service Group for Refugees and *Modern Women* magazine, also contacted CCP women leaders Deng Yingchao and Zhang Xiaomei through strict "one-to-one connections" (*danxian lianxi* 单线联系), with most of their political networks unexposed to the public. While maintaining their political networks "underground" was a necessary strategy for survival, "making friends" became a networking technique that was essential for development. The "stronghold" technique (hereafter, *judian* 据点) was therefore initiated by the CCP South Bureau to make new friends within local women's communities, hence strengthening the united front framework in KMT-controlled areas.

Unlike the KMT's ambitious recruitment plan that was enforced by party apparatuses upon local women activists, *judian* aimed at building a flexible network and increasing the CCP's influence outside the Party. According to a document from the CCP South Bureau, *judian* should be neither a party organisation nor a civil group with an official name, membership, structure or regular schedule. The *judian* was a new form of network between the Communist Party and the masses. Basically, within one district, a party member could establish a *judian* with three to five non-communist friends, and each of the *judian* members could further reach out to three to five new friends (Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu, 1986: 99-101). Comparable to the early communist cells formed before the first CCP Congress and the underground communist organisations in Shanghai during the Nanjing decade (1927-1937), the *judian* was a new networking technique applied to developing the united front framework in KMT-controlled areas in the 1940s.⁵ A *judian* network was based on the common interests shared among its members instead of communist ideologies, norms or regular work agendas. *Judian* members were not only communists, but men and women from different political backgrounds and social classes.

The *judian* technique successfully supported the implementation of the united front framework among women activists in wartime Chongqing. Between 1942 and 1945, the CCP South Bureau gradually established broad personal contacts and friendships among women activists at the WAC, the SSCA Women's Committee, *Modern Women* magazine as well as the Chongqing Women's Service Group for Refugees, and increased its influence over female students and career women from all walks of life. Starting from the second half of 1942, small study groups, reading societies and women's forums flourished in the wartime capital and by the end of the war, there were already more than a dozen women's *judian* networks in Chongqing that were affiliated with the CCP South Bureau. Women activists who had the same occupation, shared similar interests, or simply lived close to each other were motivated to meet fortnightly. During their get-togethers, brochures and other printed materials were spread out for discussion on women's issues and current political affairs (Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu, 1986: 386). Both the form and the

⁵ For more information on communist cells and networks, please see Van de Ven (1991: 57-81) and Stranahan (1998).

content of these discussions were flexible, thereby attracting women participants from different social, political and professional backgrounds. More importantly, although these women's networks were connected with the CCP South Bureau, they were not established for the purpose of promoting any radical, class-based communist ideology. Instead, as Gerry Groot (2004: 24) argues, the CCP advocated democracy and constitutional reform to appeal to non-proletarian classes and bourgeois groups.

Because of the expanding *judian* networks across local women's communities and organisations, women activists in Chongqing were able to maintain flexible but effective political connections with the CCP South Bureau. It was on the basis of these women's networks and the connections formed between the CCP South Bureau and local women activists that the China Women's Association was finally established. The *New China Daily* and Cao Mengjun's *Modern Women* magazine also played an essential role in circulating women's political claims and movements in Chongqing. By the time the CWA was established, *Modern Women* had already published 6 volumes and over 30 issues, with a mature editorial team and numerous contributors ready to continue their political activism and movements after the War of Resistance. And as soon as the CWA was founded, *Modern Women* became its official organ ("Jinhou funü gongzuo yingdang zenyang zuo", [1945] 1991: 1-5). The founding of the CWA and the CCP's timely call for peace and democracy in 1945 further helped with unifying and integrating women activists in the KMT-controlled areas for the purpose of terminating KMT political tutelage, stopping the civil war, and achieving peace and democracy in the post-war national reconstruction.

The China Women's Association: For Peace and Democracy

The China Women's Association was officially established on 15 July 1945, only one month before the Japanese surrender to the Allies. Although the CCP South Bureau played a crucial role in cultivating and connecting women's organisations in wartime Chongqing, it did not immediately pronounce its leadership over the CWA, at least not in public. The board of directors comprised 39 women leaders in Chongqing, of whom the majority were affiliated with the WAC, the SSCA Women's Committee, the Chongqing

Women's Service Group for Refugees and *Modern Women* magazine. Li Dequan, the chair of the SSCA Women's Committee, was elected chair and the executive director of the CWA. Among all the directors, only Zhang Xiaomei and Wu Quanheng were from the CCP South Bureau. Du Junhui, Peng Zigang and Han Youtong were undercover communists affiliated with the National Salvation Association. The political backgrounds of the rest of the women leaders were extremely diverse: Shi Liang, Liu Qingyang, Cao Mengjun, Liu-Wang Liming, and Hu Ziyang were all women leaders of the Democratic League; Ni Feijun and Tan Tiwu were affiliated with the KMT despite their involvement in left-wing women's organisations; Zhou Zongqiong and Rao Guomo were local businesswomen who had provided financial support to the CCP South Bureau in the 1940s; Bai Wei was a well-known female writer whilst Bai Yang was a rising film star in wartime Chongqing who later starred in *The Spring River Flows East* (*Yi jiang chunshui xiang dong liu* 一江春水向东流), a famous film produced in 1947 which revealed the trials and tribulations in the heroine's life over the eight years of the wartime period (Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu, 1986: 387).

Under a leadership composed of women elites, whose educational and social background put them in the category of "bourgeois women intellectuals" (*zichan jieji zhishi funü* 资产阶级智识妇女) ("Funü yundong jueyi", [1928] 1991: 430-440), the CWA, while connected with the CCP South Bureau, clearly was not yet dominated by communists. Instead, it was established against the backdrop of the growing political movements for peace and democracy among Chinese intellectuals and students after the War of Resistance. As Suzanne Pepper (1999: 133) suggests, it was the relatively liberal climate that had been established among the Chinese intellectuals if not among political leaders that allowed the anti-civil war movements to thrive in the post-war period. However, this "liberal climate", having also enabled women's political participation during the War of Resistance, was seriously threatened under the shadow of the enlarging civil war and the KMT's tightened political control. The primary goal of the WAC was therefore to demand peace and democracy for the post-war national reconstruction, as well as for women's political rights and representation.

The CWA warned Chinese women of the still frustrating post-war political situation facing them: "Three months after Japan's surrender, the people in

China are still enduring chaotic politics, inflation, economic recession and an expanding civil war; we therefore urge Chinese women to protest against the civil war and to give our own suggestions to the government” (Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu, 1986: 393). On 9 January 1946, one day before the First Political Consultative Conference (*zhengzhi xieshang huiyi* 政治协商会议) called by the Nationalist government, the CWA hosted a tea reception at the SSCA to discuss the urgent issues that concerned women after the war. To ensure that their voice was heard at the conference, the CWA also invited more than ten political representatives from the KMT, the CCP, the Democratic League and the Youth Party, who would attend the conference the next day (“Zhongguo fuyun shi shang bu pingfan de yi ye”, [1946] 1991: 89-92).

According to the report published in *Modern Women*, not only CWA leaders but also many ordinary women in Chongqing enthusiastically participated in this event. One hour before it started, the two-storey house of the SSCA had already been crowded with over 100 women attendees. Many of the women activists present, such as Shi Liang and Liu Qingyang, had also participated in the constitutional movement during the war, and had urged the Nationalist government to terminate political tutelage and promote constitutional governance (Xia, 2010: 244-249). Their movement became stagnant towards the end of war because the government had been—using the “exigency of warfare” as an excuse—hesitant to either summon a national assembly or promulgate the constitution. Therefore, these women activists considered the First Political Consultative Conference as the best opportunity to push the Nationalist government to amend the Double Fifth Draft Constitution, to hold a general election and to eventually form a coalition government with participation by all political parties (“Zhongguo fuyun shi shang bu pingfan de yi ye”, [1946] 1991: 92-93).

Without any tedious introduction or ostentatious opening remarks, the CWA chair Li Dequan went directly to the topic: “The purpose of the Political Consultative Conference is to achieve peace and democracy, so that the government can be elected by the people and women can enjoy their equal rights and shoulder equal responsibilities” (“Zhongguo fuyun shi shang bu pingfan de yi ye”, [1946] 1991: 90). Following Li’s talk, Cao Mengjun further articulated women’s basic claims to political and electoral rights, career

opportunities, social security and healthcare for mothers and children. She emphasised that, after the war, the right to freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and of association should also be the basic rights of women: “At the moment we women activists do not even have the freedom to sit together and discuss our own issues. We are either interrupted by the police or spied on by suspicious people eavesdropping at the window” (“Zhongguo fuyun shi shang bu pingfan de yi ye”, [1946] 1991: 89-92)

The political representatives on stage were all impressed by the political enthusiasm showed by the women activists who were present. Non-partisan representative Hu Lin stated that it was the first time for him to speak to so many women, and it was also the first time that he realised women had such an in-depth understanding of national affairs. Democratic League representative Shen Junru suggested that women establish a mission of military investigation, and a committee for the study of the constitution, so as to devote their own efforts towards “peace and democracy”. Believing general elections and women’s suffrage to be the foundations of democracy, Luo Longji, also a representative of the Democratic League, encouraged Chinese women to unite and fight for their own rights like British women had done after the First World War (“Zhongguo fuyun shi shang bu pingfan de yi ye”, [1946] 1991: 94-96). Nonetheless, choosing their words carefully, most of the representatives only made general promises to involve women in national politics and realise women’s rights in the future. These promises did not satisfy the audience. In the middle of the meeting, a note from the audience was passed on to Li Dequan, and Li read it aloud to the delegates on stage:

We are teachers of many poor children who were separated from parents during the war. These children were told that there will be no more wars, but a civil war has just started. I hope that everyone on stage today will be responsible for what you have promised, stop the civil war immediately and let these poor children go back to their mothers (“Zhongguo fuyun shi shang bu pingfan de yi ye”, [1946] 1991: 97).

The active interactions between the audience and the political representatives demonstrate that Chinese women activists were both

determined and prepared to play a crucial role in post-war political reform and national reconstruction. In the face of enduring chaotic politics, economic recession and an expanding civil war, they articulated their claims regarding a cease-fire and democracy, and used the CWA as a platform to enhance and circulate these claims. For these women activists, who had just experienced the Second World War in China, “democracy” was neither simply the rhetoric applied by political parties to obtain support and legitimacy, nor was it the political panacea that could be prescribed to heal China’s diseases overnight. Rather, these women activists adopted concrete political goals and expected to achieve them through post-war peace and democratic movements: they advocated women’s rights to freedom of speech, organisation and assembly in public and therefore to be able to further participate in national affairs; they requested fairness and equal opportunity for women at work; and they campaigned for women’s political representation at the to-be-summoned National Assembly so as to veto the civil war and to bring back peace to mothers and children.

It is apparent that their feminist concerns were deeply intertwined with their political objectives to realise peace, constitutional governance and democracy. As Tani Barlow (2004: 3) points out, Chinese feminism has, since its birth, been tightly connected to contemporary deliberations about the nation and its development. And given the prolonged social and political disorder in post-war China, the feminist agenda of the CWA—expressed in general terms of women’s political and electoral rights, career opportunities, social security and healthcare for mothers and children—was inextricable from its broader political claim, regarding a ceasefire and national reconstruction.

In the name of “women’s unity and friendship” (*funü lianyi* 妇女联谊), the CWA provided Chinese women activists, despite their different political backgrounds, with an inclusive and flexible workshop to continue pursuing their political goals in the immediate post-war years without joining the Communist Party. The enhanced networks and communication among these pro-CCP women activists reciprocally reinforced the united front framework and enabled the CCP’s effective use of the meagre social and political resources in the KMT-controlled areas. By mid-1946, the CWA had already developed 25 sub-groups with approximately 350 members in Chongqing; local branches were

firstly established in Kunming, Beiping,⁶ Shanghai and Nanjing, and later in Chengdu, Guilin and Hong Kong (Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu, 1986: 468).

However, following the outbreak of a full-scale civil war in 1947, the political and economic conditions in the KMT-controlled areas further deteriorated and the liberal political milieu for women activists' independent and spontaneous activism was in rapid decline. Sustaining the diversity and flexibility in their political engagement, and holding a neutral political position, became increasingly difficult for Chinese women activists during an enlarged civil war between the KMT and the CCP. In terms of their political position and their relationship with the Communist Party, it was as James Wilkinson (1981: 106) has pointed out with regard to their counterparts in France: "Choice during the Resistance was easy: one was for or against the resistance; it was black or white. Today—and since 1945—the situation has grown more complex."

Leaning to the Left

The civil war between the KMT and the CCP in the late 1940s, like the eight-year War of Resistance, brought about significant social and political changes to China. Because of the administrative chaos, military threat and economic recession, the cosmopolitan urban sites of Shanghai, Beijing and Nanjing were already in decline (Westad, 2003: 89-96). Women activists who returned to the urban areas in eastern China after the war not only encountered a worsened political climate for their public activities, but also struggled between the battling political parties to sustain their political position and participation. Although the majority of them had expected to maintain a relatively neutral position by joining the Democratic League, and to pursue their political goals within the inclusive structure of the CWA, they could no longer do so after 1947 for the following reasons. First, the KMT outlawed the Democratic League and launched a full-scale persecution of political activists who were suspected of supporting the CCP. Second, the sharply deepened recession and hyperinflation made any independent women's organisation and activity difficult to continue

⁶ The name for Beijing between 1928 and 1937, and between 1945 and 1949.

in the KMT-controlled urban sites. Third, the CCP's military victories over the KMT troops in Manchuria and north China made it more reasonable for them to go to the "liberated areas" (*jiefang qu* 解放区) than to follow the defeated KMT to Taiwan. As a result, Chinese women activists leaned further to the political left by the end of the 1940s.

In 1946, following the Nationalist government's "return to Nanjing", most CWA members left Chongqing for Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing, while a few local women leaders stayed in Chongqing to organise the CWA Chongqing branch. Women activists who were originally from the Nanjing-Shanghai region, such as Tan Tiwu, returned to Nanjing and established the CWA Nanjing branch, while Liu Qingyang and Zhang Xiaomei returned to Beijing to lead the Beijing branch. The rest of the CWA members went back to Shanghai and combined their branch with local women's communities led by Xu Guangping (widow of the eminent writer Lu Xun) during the war. The standing committee of the CWA Shanghai branch included many famous names such as Xu Guangping, Shi Liang, Cao Mengjun and Hu Ziyang (*Nanfangju dangshi ziliao zhengji xiaozu*, 1986: 391).

Also returning to eastern China after the war were women activists who had been affiliated with the KMT. With most of its local branches and service groups dismissed by the end of the war, Madame Chiang's Women's Advisory Council (WAC) was reorganised in Nanjing in 1946 (Chongqing Municipal Archives, 1946a: 81-92). On 24 March, only the WAC director-general Chen Jiyi and 33 chief leaders flew from Chongqing to Nanjing (Chongqing Municipal Archives, 1946b: 281). The scale of the organisation and its membership were in rapid decline, since most of its chief leaders had left for Shanghai, Guangzhou or Taiwan during the civil war (Song, 2012: 79). Along with the dissolution of the WAC, the focus of the Nationalist government was changed from mobilizing women for resistance to the development of the KMT. The KMT Central Women's Movement Committee, previously under the administration of the KMT Central Organisation Department, was reorganised directly under the KMT Central Executive Committee, with 46 provincial/municipal branches and 851 county-level branches established in most parts of China except for Manchuria by July 1947 (Hong, 2010: 320-322). In this regard, the WAC—a wartime cross-party women's organisation for national resistance—was by then replaced with

a KMT party organ to recruit women members as well as to investigate and contain non-KMT women's political activities (Hong, 2010: 325).

Political tension further heightened in 1947 after the peace negotiation between the two major parties had failed and the Democratic League had been outlawed by the Nationalist government. In order to purge the political left wing, the KMT sent secret orders to local institutions, schools and universities, demanding a fight against both "the wicked CCP (*jian dang* 奸党) and the wicked Democratic League (*jian meng* 奸盟)" (Kunming Municipal Archives, 1946, 1947 and 1948). Many leaders and members of the Democratic League were arrested by the KMT secret police (Groot, 2004: 53-54). The inability of the Nationalist government to achieve peace and democracy after war and the KMT's abuse of power further disappointed women activists who used to prefer a neutral position. For many of them, as Edmund Fung (2000: 307) argues, "By mid-1947, the Nationalist government had absolutely lost its legitimacy and moral leadership."

CWA members who were affiliated with the Democratic League, such as Liu-Wang Liming and Cao Mengjun, went to Hong Kong in 1947 to avoid political arrests and assassinations and to restructure their political organisation. Liu-Wang Liming, who was also the president of the China branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), told journalists in Hong Kong that, "The political situation on the mainland is too bad to do anything, so I had to come to Hong Kong to continue my career." When asked about her experience as a delegate to the People's Political Council, she explained that she had to "sing high praises, make political declarations, meet VIPs and endure economic crisis" (Si, 1947: 11-12). Having escaped from the KMT-controlled areas, these women activists soon organised a CWA branch in Hong Kong to enhance the connections between the CCP and local women's communities in Hong Kong and Canton (Li, 2004: 329).

In January 1948, the Democratic League called the third plenary of the first Central Committee in Hong Kong and officially announced that the League would cooperate with the CCP to achieve peace and democracy in the post-war national reconstruction (Li, 2004: 326-328). The official cooperation between the Democratic League and the CCP further strengthened the CCP united front

framework; as Mary Mazur (1997: 51) argues, during this period, members of democratic parties joined willingly in the transitional realignment of the United Front. This “realigned” united front between the CCP and the Democratic League, not only appealed to the League members who moved to Hong Kong in 1947, but also to the majority of women activists who stayed in mainland China during the civil war.

For women activists who endured both political persecution and economic disorder in the KMT-controlled urban sites on the mainland, their final leaning to the left was, to a great degree, because the Nationalist government left them no hope for survival, neither physically nor politically. The recession and hyperinflation in the late 1940s significantly hampered women activists’ political organisation and activities. Keeping a low political profile and securing a source of income was the only way for many of them to survive the civil war. CWA leader Hu Ziying stayed in Shanghai as a single mother with her daughter while her ex-husband, the famous Democratic League leader and financier Zhang Naiqi, went to Hong Kong. Working for a bank, Hu Ziying witnessed how the recession and hyperinflation destroyed people’s lives. She experienced the panic-buying and hoarding among housewives and shared their concerns about the future:

Feeling anxious and sad, all the housewives in town joined scalpers in the crazy buying and hoarding. They tried to buy anything available no matter whether they needed it or not. Shops in Shanghai were emptied within a day. And since yesterday, some women have even started queuing up to buy coffins (Hu, 1946).

The sight of housewives queuing up to buy coffins not only illustrates the socio-economic disorder in post-war Shanghai, but also reflects the pessimistic view of the future shared among locals. Given the dispiriting political and economic conditions, to maintain any kind of political organisation or activism was difficult for women activists who stayed in the KMT-controlled urban areas. Almost all CWA branches on the mainland were forced to cease activity. Although members were still trying to continue underground activities among local career women and housewives, the Beiping branch became virtually

paralysed after Liu Qingyang and Zhang Xiaomei left for Xibaipo, the erstwhile CCP headquarters, in September 1948 (Liu, 2009: 220). Shi Liang, Hu Ziyang and Ni Feijun in Shanghai also felt the difficulty of sustaining the Shanghai Branch after 1947. After she returned to Shanghai, the Democratic League leader Shi Liang worked as a lawyer under strict surveillance by KMT agents. As soon as the retreating Nationalist government started murdering communists and any political activists suspected of being communists, Shi Liang became one of the most-wanted figures in town. Secret agents arrested almost all of her relatives and household staff, and tortured them in an effort to discover her whereabouts, while she moved from one place to another to escape the KMT's execution order (Shi, 1987: 71-72).

Parks M. Coble (2008: 130) has pointed out that, during the civil war, not only had the economy been shattered by fighting and hyperinflation, but the end of extraterritoriality further eliminated the "neutral zones" that had given the many nongovernmental organisations a degree of autonomy. This is particularly true in terms of women activists' political reorganisation in the post-war period. Due to the KMT's strengthened central control over the women's movement and its persecution of opposition activists, the relatively liberal milieu for women's political participation and organisation ceased to exist in the late 1940s. And after Madame Chiang's Women's Advisory Council was replaced by the KMT Central Women's Movement Committee, and the Democratic League had coalesced into the CCP party structure, the "neutral zone" for women's political engagement also disappeared. Disappointed by the KMT's political performance while longing for post-war reconstruction, political pluralism and democracy, Chinese women activists who stayed on the mainland eventually leaned to the political left and accommodated themselves within the CCP's united front framework.

Going to the Liberated Areas and Founding the All-China Women's Federation

By the end of 1948, the CCP's Liberation Army had secured military victory in northeast China and was advancing quickly down to north and central China

(Zarrow, 2006: 343).⁷ In order to also expedite its political victory over the KMT, the CCP invited prominent intellectuals, left-wing political activists and social elites in the KMT-controlled cities and in Hong Kong to come to the liberated areas to establish a new government (Mazur, 1997: 57). This call, like the CCP's call for an anti-Japanese United Front in 1935, came right in time to stimulate political activists who had been longing for the end of civil conflicts and the beginning of national reconstruction (Groot, 2004:16). Invited to Xibaipo and later to Shenyang and Beijing were also a number of women activists, whose political support was equally important for the Party to showcase its achievements in the area of "women's liberation".

In the remaining KMT-controlled cities in east and south China, except for a small number of KMT women leaders who had gone to Guangzhou and Taiwan to prepare for the retreat of the Nationalist government, the majority of KMT women activists were dismissed and returned to their hometowns. By the time the Nationalist Government retreated to Taiwan, there were only three women leaders left in the KMT Central Women's Movement Committee (Hong, 2010: 321). For the remainder of women activists scattered in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing and the rest of the cities still under KMT control, going to the liberated areas and supporting the CCP to establish a new democratic government became the best available choice to maintain their organisation and achieve their political goals.

Despite the long and arduous journey crossing the battlefields of the civil war, going to the liberated areas was a memorable experience for many women activists. In August 1948, Shen Ziju, the previous leader of the Women's Advisory Council, who had left the mainland to escape KMT persecution during the war, went to Xibaipo together with her husband Hu Yuzhi. Disguised as businessmen on a British ship, they firstly set out for Dalian, a port controlled by Soviet troops, and then took a boat headed for Jiaodong Peninsula. After waiting in a fishing village on a small island for a few days, they then went to Shijiazhuang, where they met with some other political activists and social elites

⁷ Known as the CCP's three major military campaigns against the KMT during the civil war, the Liaoshen Campaign, Huaihai Campaign and Pingjin Campaign lasted from September 1948 to January 1949. By the end of the three major campaigns, Chiang Kai-shek's main forces had been destroyed, and the Liberation Army began moving across the Yangtze in the spring of 1949.

who had come from Hong Kong through Tianjin, a city still under the KMT's control at that time. Shen Ziju and Hu Yuzhi's arrival in Xibaipo was highly appreciated by CCP leaders. It was already 3 am when they finally arrived, but Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao still got up to welcome them in person. The CCP Social Department organised a welcome party for them the next day. And over the following days, the couple was invited to join CCP leaders at different meetings and dinners. Mao Zedong also came to meet with them at a dinner party, which was followed by a ball. Mao himself was fond of dancing and therefore expected to impress his two guests who had studied and worked overseas with this stereotypically Western social activity, and presumably also hoped to shorten the distance between political elites hailing from KMT-held regions and the Communist Party. However, to Mao's surprise, both Shen Ziju and Hu Yuzhi had never learnt ballroom dancing (Hu, 2009; Yu, 2011: 330).

Not only the party leaders in Xibaipo, but also the staff members of the CCP United Front Department in the liberated areas succeeded in making a positive impression on women activists. After Shenyang (formerly known as Mukden) was taken over by the CCP, another group of eminent intellectuals and political activists went there from Hong Kong and Shanghai, joining those in Xibaipo in supporting the CCP to found a new government. CWA leaders Li Dequan, Cao Mengjun, Xu Guangping and Li Wenyi were within this group. As Li Wenyi remembered, the staff of the United Front Department in Shenyang treated them as privileged guests of Mao Zedong. Not only was good food served to them in their hotel every day, but a tailor was sent to make new Zhongshan suits, coats, leather hats, and shoes for each of them. Furthermore, having suffered from insecurity and instability during the wartime period, Li Wenyi and her colleagues were able to briefly resume the old life-style and leisure activities they had enjoyed before the war: they went out to purchase antiques and paintings, and they had a good time choosing and buying artworks in the street and then sharing their favourite pieces with each other (Li, 2004: 362). After Beijing was taken over in January 1949, these women activists took a special train from Shenyang to Beijing; as the Party's most honoured guests, they stayed at the renowned Beijing Hotel, only a five-minute walk from Tiananmen Square (Li, 2004: 363-364).

Overwhelmed with all the attention and respect they received from the CCP, it was no coincidence that most Chinese women activists, whose political activism had been restricted in the KMT-controlled areas and whose careers and safety had been frequently threatened during the civil war, found themselves ready to go to the liberated areas and take on new political endeavours and responsibilities for the post-war national reconstruction. Their own need to promote political unity and to build a “new China”, as Mazur (1997: 57) argues, motivated their choice to support and participate in the founding of the new Chinese government under the leadership of the CCP. Despite their diverse political affiliations and bourgeois background during the war, they congregated in the liberated areas and participated in the workshops organised by the Central Committee of the CCP in order to prepare for the first National Conference of Women’s Representatives and for the establishment of the All-China Women’s Federation.

In April 1949, half year before the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the All-China Women’s Federation was established in Beijing (*Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui sishi nian*, 1991: 1-3). It is noteworthy that, before becoming a CCP women’s organisation, the ACWF firstly functioned as a “united front” institution for the purpose of accommodating the various political organisations, societies and networks maintained by women activists during the War of Resistance (“*Zhongguo funü yundong dangqian renwu de jueyi*”, [1949] 1991: 390). Prominent CWA leaders who had participated in a variety of political institutions and women’s organisations in the KMT-controlled areas, such as Li Dequan, Shi Liang, Li Wenyi and Liu-Wang Liming, were “elected” into the executive and standing committees of the ACWF. The CWA, together with the remainder of independent women’s organisations such as the Young Women’s Christian Association and the WCTU, was eventually merged within the structure the ACWF (*Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui sishi nian*, 1991: 5, 59; Beijing Municipal Archives, 1960). At the first National Conference of Women’s Representatives, a resolution for the women’s movement was also passed, which called for the unification of Chinese women to pursue the revolution against the KMT regime and to build “a brand-new People’s Democratic Republic of China” (*zhanxin de Renmin Minzhu Gongheguo* 嶄新的人民民主共和国) as the only path towards women’s liberation (“*Zhongguo funü yundong dangqian renwu de jueyi*”, [1949] 1991: 390).

Since the liberal political environment that had existed at the beginning of the War of Resistance was already long gone by the end of the civil war, the establishment of the ACWF and the “brand-new People’s Democratic Republic of China” did at least bring hope to Chinese women activists seeking a re-opening of the space for their political activism and organisation. But it would be arbitrary to argue that at this moment, all the women activists integrated within the ACWF framework firmly believed that their feminist and political goals would be achieved under the CCP’s leadership. Suzanne Pepper (1999: 200) points out the prevailing concern of Chinese liberal activists that the “New Democracy” could be only performed under Communist Party control. Worse still, as soon as victory over the KMT was secured in 1949, Mao, striving to escape from the bounds of “New Democracy”, tried to return to the radical party line, that is, to upholding the dictatorship of the proletariat, and making other political parties and forces leave the political stage (Levine & Pantsov, 2013: 357-358).

Despite the high political status given to them within the ACWF, doubts and fears soon arose among those bourgeois women activists hailing from the KMT-controlled areas: during the preparation period between late 1948 and early 1949, Li Wenyi (2004: 364-365) complained about the dominant CCP women leaders who demanded that she take on a heavy workload, but who eventually took the credit for her work. After the WCTU had merged into the ACWF, its president, Liu-Wang Liming, was also irritated by the fact that some party officials had tried to stop her from attending the 18th World Conference of the WCTU in Hastings, England in 1952 (Huang, 1990: 143-144). Other previous CWA members were upset when they realised that “our organisations have been swallowed by the ACWF!” (Beijing Municipal Archives, n.d.: 26). And as the CCP further launched a series of campaigns and movements in the 1950s, during which surveillance reports, denunciation letters and the so-called “heart-to-heart” talks (*jiaoxin* 交心) became the main channel of communication between ACWF members and the Party, the space for Chinese women activists’ spontaneous and independent political activism was, instead of reopened, finally closed.⁸

⁸ Beijing Municipal Archives file 84-1-42 gathers letters and reports sent from both ACWF members and anonymous persons to Zhang Xiaomei, the CCP leader and chairwomen of the ACWF Beijing branch, concerning the problems, antagonisms, and inappropriate words or deeds

Conclusion

The establishment of the ACWF signals the completion of the political reorganisation of Chinese women activists within the CCP united front framework. From the CWA to the ACWF, the successful organisational transition, and the maintenance of membership, also suggest the continuous and active engagement of women with the CCP in the KMT-controlled areas both during and after the War of Resistance. The united front framework, equipped with the “New Democracy” ideology and the extensive *judian* networks, allowed elite women activists in the KMT-run areas, despite their different political backgrounds, to effectively engage with the CCP without joining the Party. And therefore, it played an essential role in their gradual integration into the CWA and later into the ACWF.

However, as this article demonstrates, Chinese women activists’ political reorganisation in the post-war period was not simply prompted by the increasing political penetration of the CCP, but also by the fast-shifting political and economic conditions in the KMT-controlled areas during the immediate post-war period. On the one hand, the socio-economic disorder in the urban sites of eastern China, and the KMT’s purge of political opponents, resulted in the declining popularity of the Nationalist government among women activists. On the other hand, the outbreak of a full-scale civil war and the official cooperation between the Democratic League and the CCP in 1947 sharpened the cleavage between the political right and the left. Therefore, the space for women’s cross-party political activism and organisation was already fast shrinking, long before the communist takeover. To adopt a neutral position became increasingly difficult, while “leaning to the left” appeared to be the only available choice for Chinese women activists to maintain their political position and participation in the post-war national reconstruction led by the Communist Party.

of other members. For instance, in 1952, Zhang Xiaomei received an anonymous report entitled “For Chairwoman Zhang to archive and please consider whether to show it to comrades Peng Zhen and Liu Ren”. This report—more than 10 pages—questioned Liu-Wang Liming’s personal property and savings, and harshly criticised her political behaviour and her social relations (Beijing Municipal Archives, 1952: 8-16).

It is also important to underline that it is the relatively liberal approach adopted by the CCP, and the cross-party communication endorsed by the united front framework, that appealed to these bourgeois women activists hailing from the KMT-controlled areas. Therefore, their political reorganisation in favour of the CCP in the post-war period does not indicate their exclusive political loyalty. The CWA consisted of women activists from different political parties and groups, who were persistent in advocating political pluralism and democracy, and in pursuing their political goals through national resistance and reconstruction. After they lost confidence in the KMT regime during the civil war, they expected these goals to be achieved within the CCP united front framework, regardless of the political labels attached to them. In 1947, Tan Tiwu, one of the CWA leaders and a female legislator in the Legislative Yuan, told a *Modern Women* journalist that, "I do not know what is leftist and what is rightist ... I have always believed in peace, independence, democracy and freedom for my country, regardless of whether it means that I am a leftist or rightist" (Hui, 1947:10).

Despite their enthusiasm for going to the liberated areas and supporting the national reconstruction under the CCP's leadership, they were not prepared for the CCP's party line and centralised control over the ACWF from the 1950s onwards. Unfortunately, for many of these women activists, as Louise Edwards (2010: 63-64) puts it, prior to 1949, the CCP adopted a flexible approach to women with "bourgeois feminist" positions and saw the diverse women's associations as a crucial avenue into an important segment of the politically active population. But after their victory in 1949, the need to maintain such niceties subsided. Although the development of the ACWF and the political experience of Chinese women activists after 1949 are beyond the scope of this research, a deepened understanding of how and why Chinese women activists had reorganised themselves within the CCP party framework by 1949 will provide valuable historical perspectives for the study of the shifting relations between the Party, the ACWF and Chinese women activists during and after the Maoist era.

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Vivienne Xiangwei Guo is Lecturer in Modern Chinese History at the University of Exeter.

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**The Contested Role of Foreign and Domestic Foundations in the PRC:
Policies, Positions, Paradigms, Power**

Andreas Fulda
University of Nottingham

Abstract

This research paper examines how foundations—foreign and domestic, public and private, operating and grant making—engage with Chinese civil society organisations in an authoritarian political context. In contrast to previous literature, which considers civil society through the lens of state-society relations, the author contends that in the case of China, civil society-building has been a foundation-led process.

Following a discussion of conceptual caveats in the nascent field of foundation research, the author traces how China's evolving policy framework has influenced the development trajectories, legal statuses and modes of operation of both foreign and domestic foundations.

The empirical part of the paper focuses on foundation positions, paradigms and power. Based on 12 in-depth interviews conducted in 2014 with foundation representatives and CSO leaders, this research reveals how foreign and domestic foundations position themselves vis-à-vis the party-state, market and civil society; how they understand philanthropy; and how they deal with the power imbalance in the relationship between grant maker and grantee.

Research findings show that foundations have different value propositions, visions and missions, as well as different theories of change, which determine their philanthropic approaches. Foreign and domestic foundation representatives primarily follow a paradigm of conventional charity, managerial philanthropy, or political philanthropy. Findings from this research raise a number of pertinent questions about the likely impacts of China's controversial Overseas NGO Law on foreign and domestic foundations and their grantees.

Keywords: *PR China, INGOs, foundations, policy, Overseas NGO Law, paradigms, charity, philanthropy, civil society, CSOs.*

Unprecedented wealth accumulation over the past three decades has fuelled the growth of charity and philanthropy in the People's Republic of China (PRC). While charitable giving by individuals and families has a long history in China (Smith, 2009; Tsu, 1912; Zhang & Zhang, 2014: 83), more complex forms of philanthropy that aim at "longer-term change to benefit a larger and unknown number of people" (Anheier & Leat, 2002: 163) are both a much more recent phenomenon and a foreign import. Such philanthropy has its roots in "the modern, methodical, and self-confident approach of ... large-scale US foundations" (Anheier & Leat, 2002: 39) and can be considered one of the legacies of international giving to China since 1978. In mainland China, at least 221 international NGOs (INGOs) entered the PRC between 1978 and 2012 (China Development Brief, 2012: 10–11). They now coexist there alongside 5,942 officially registered domestic foundations (Jijinhui zhongxin wang, 2017). Both foreign and domestic foundations tend to support Chinese civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in a wide range of issue areas deemed acceptable to the party-state.

While mainland China is increasingly part of a global system of philanthropy, no systematic attempts have yet been made to compare and contrast the contributions of foreign and domestic foundations to philanthropic development. In this context, philanthropic development is understood to include foundation activities related to information sharing, institution building, training and facilitation. In an accumulative fashion, such diverse foundation activities and agendas help nurture the ecology of a given civil society (Lilja, 2015). In the context of mainland China, a rather broad definition of civil society as an "intermediate associational realm situated between the state on the one side and the basic building blocks of society on the other (individuals, families, and firms), populated by social organizations which are separate, and enjoy some autonomy from the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values" (White et al., 1996: 3) is employed. This definition enables researchers to capture the associational pluralism that has taken place since the reform and opening up process began in 1978. This research article raises the overarching question of how foundations—foreign and domestic, public and private, operating and grant making—are engaging with Chinese CSOs in an authoritarian political context.

Gaps in the Existing Literature on Chinese Civil Society

Empirical research on the relationship between foundations and Chinese CSOs has been thin on the ground. In their article on the local corporatist state and NGO relations in China, Hsu and Hasmath (2014) do not include foreign and domestic foundations in their analysis. In his critique of transnational civil society, Jie Chen (2012) limits his discussion primarily to US-based foundations. In his monograph on social organisations in the PRC, Hildebrandt (2013) discusses foundations primarily in the context of the availability or absence of foreign funding. Recent scholarship by Hasmath, Hildebrandt and Hsu on the GONGOisation of the NGO sector is another example of civil society scholarship which almost exclusively focuses on the GONGO-party-state relationship (2016). The three scholars do not account for the significant amount of foreign funding and capacity building support by foreign experts that modernising GONGOs—for example the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)—have received over the past twenty years. A noticeable exception has been the work of the Beijing-based civil society think tank China Development Brief (CDB). Liu Haiying and Shawn Shieh have filled the void by providing up-to-date news reports and blog posts about recent developments among foreign and domestic foundations. Their insights into the changing donor landscape in China, however, are not reflected in published academic research articles on this subject.

What explains the lack of academic research on the foundation-CSO relationship? A number of contributing factors can be identified. Civil society researchers have so far primarily concerned themselves with theory-building. An over-emphasis on theory has led to a lack of scholarly interest in some of the practicalities of CSO work in China, especially the challenge of fundraising. Another explanatory factor lies with Chinese civil society practitioners themselves. When accepting interviews by researchers, they tend to be reluctant to talk about their funding sources. They are mindful that conservative members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are extremely critical of their dependence on foreign funding, which can be seen from the recently enacted Overseas NGO Law. To complicate matters even more, foreign and domestic foundation representatives tend to be tight-lipped about their grant-making practices in mainland China. In his seminal study of grant-making foundations,

Joel Orosz (2000: 30) remarked that “many foundations have deliberately sought to avoid publicity. Reasons for their doing so can range from the laudable (a desire to do good works quietly without receiving credit) to the questionable (it’s no one’s business how we choose to do good works).”

The lack of research on foundations can be considered a major shortcoming of the field of civil society studies. Current civil society research is let down by an almost exclusive focus on resource-dependent CSOs—which researchers can easily research—and suffers from a neglect for the central role of resource-rich foundations, which for the above-mentioned reasons are much harder to access. To use the language of economics, in the field of civil society, researchers have so far primarily focused on the *supply chain* of CSOs carrying out initiatives for their various funders. This has come at the expense of analysing the considerable power that foundations wield over their grantees.¹ So far, scholars have interpreted the development of China’s civil society almost exclusively through the lens of state-society relations. In stark contrast, the author suggests that from the mid-1990s until the enactment of the Overseas NGO Law in 2017, civil society building in the PRC should be considered a foundation-led process. In line with this new analytical framework, this article primarily concerns itself with grant-making foundations, which like aid agencies, are “committed to improving people’s lives and expanding their choices. They face similar challenges in terms of project selection, supervision, and the need to balance the achievement of immediate targets against the need for long-term capacity building” (OECD, 2003).

But how can greater transparency about the operations of resource-rich foreign and domestic foundations be brought about? The author agrees with Orosz’s (2000: 31) assessment that “foundations should be supporting work of real public utility, and if they are, the public has a right to know about it.”

¹ Focusing on CSOs at the expense of foundations is as if researchers interested in the subject of supply chain management in China were to focus exclusively on small and medium sized enterprises and their relationship with the party-state, whilst ignoring the role of multinational corporations procuring SME products and services. Current civil society research similarly primarily concerns itself with the relationship between CSOs and the party-state (Hsu & Hasmath 2014; Teets 2014). The overemphasis on the state in civil society research has been critiqued by Howell (2012).

Despite the risks that come along with greater publicity, both foreign and domestic foundation representatives agreed to be interviewed for this research paper. Interviewees gave CDB and the Philadelphia-based philanthropic consultancy, Geneva Global (GG) consent to publish the full English and Chinese-language transcripts on the CDB website. They now form a repertoire of first-hand testimonials which researchers can draw on to discern foreign and domestic foundations' paradigmatic choices from an emic perspective.

The in-depth interviews, many of which lasted for two hours or more, capture the self-perception of foundations as articulated by their leading representatives. In order to analyse the vast amount of qualitative interview data, the author applied Hinton and Groves's (2004: 7) heuristic framework of critical and dynamic choices for aid actors. The author distinguishes between foreign and domestic foundation representatives which either follow primarily a traditional charity, managerial philanthropic or political philanthropic paradigm. This research applies a new and innovative conceptual approach to studying foreign and domestic foundations operating under authoritarian conditions. While this article focuses on the PRC, its conceptual framework and research approach is globally applicable and can help inform a new agenda in comparative foundation research.

This article is structured as follows. After a discussion of conceptual caveats in current foundation research, China's evolving policy framework will be discussed. In this first part of the paper, the author will show how different regulatory regimes have influenced the development trajectories, legal statuses and modes of operation of both foreign and domestic foundations. The second empirical part of the article focuses on foundation positions, paradigms and power. Based on 12 interviews, which the author conducted in 2014 with foundation representatives and CSO leaders, it will be determined how foreign and domestic foundations position themselves vis-à-vis the party-state, market and civil society; how they understand philanthropy; and how foreign and domestic philanthropic foundations deal with the power imbalance in the relationship between grant-maker and grantee.

Conceptual Caveats in Foundation Research

A review of the literature on foundations not only reveals a dearth of China-related empirical case studies, but the few works that are available on the subject are also let down by a lack of conceptual rigour. Early works by Anthony Spires (2012) and Holly Fetter (2013) are a case in point. Both scholars have argued that, due to the funders' supposed conservative political and economic agendas, foundations mostly support positions that are acceptable to the Chinese authoritarian regime rather than those that promote democratic change. Spires and Fetter share the implicit view that the contributions—or lack thereof—that foundations make to political development should be a key measure of their success or failure. Their scholarship implies the existence of ideal types ranging from apolitical foundations, which are supposedly “well in tune with the Chinese Party-state’s own political and social agenda” (Spires, 2012: 146), to more politically radical ones that are “willing to take a risk and fund the grassroots NGOs and individuals that were developing resistance to the Chinese State” (Fetter, 2013: 64).

In the case of the PRC, the Open Society Institute springs to mind as a foundation with a very political profile. However, as its founder George Soros has admitted, his organisation cannot operate in mainland China because of its openly declared pro-democracy agenda (Yu, 2016). Are all foundations that operate with at least tacit approval from the CCP therefore apolitical? Spires (2012: 146) has made the implicit argument that foundations should challenge the political status quo in more radical ways. The temporary blacklisting of Oxfam between 2003 and 2008, however, shows that no foundation operating in the PRC can function without its host. This also applies to foreign and domestic foundations operating in other non-democratic countries. For this reason, one should consider the distinction between supposedly apolitical foundations and politically more radical ones to be misleading at best, or a false dichotomy at worst. Mono-directional interpretations of the reach and significance of a foundation’s work are also problematic from a theoretical, empirical and pragmatic perspective.

From a *theoretical* perspective, it is possible for a foundation to contribute to societal self-organisation in the PRC while simultaneously—and probably

inadvertently—helping to enhance the capacities of the party-state. This political paradox of foundation-led civil society building is well known to practitioners. When designing and delivering three major capacity-building initiatives for Chinese CSOs over the last ten years, the author employed strategic approaches that addressed the concerns of the Chinese party-state while at the same time meeting the needs of Chinese civil society stakeholders. In *Civil Society Contributions to Policy Innovation in the PR China*, all fifteen contributors “considered collaborative state–society relations a necessary precondition for Chinese civil society to gradually extend its reach and significance” (Fulda, 2015: 10). This is why a key measure of the effectiveness of a foundation is its ability to foster collaborative state–society relations in the PRC, thus contributing towards embedding, deepening and broadening the ecology of civil society. Under continued authoritarian one-party rule, it is premature to discuss whether funding support for Chinese CSOs leads to the development of a political society in China. The latter can be understood to mean a “particular set of institutionalised relationship[s] between state and society based on the principles of citizenship, civil rights, representation, and the rule of law” (White et al., 1996: 208–9).

Analytical frameworks that only measure foundations in relation to their perceived contributions to China’s democratisation are also problematic from an *empirical* perspective. None of the foundation representatives interviewed for this article suggested that his or her foundation was supporting political transformation in China, but that does not mean they are all apolitical. The foundations studied here pursue agendas that range from poverty alleviation, child welfare and environmental protection to philanthropic development. In an accumulative fashion, such diverse activities help nurture the ecology of a given civil society. Foundations can thus play a positive role in China by expanding the space for associational activities, by encouraging public discourse and by supporting better dialogue between citizens and cadres (Fulda, 2015: 5). Moreover, they can help build organisational fields that foster “inter-organisational networks,” promote “particular conceptions of appropriate action (or field frames),” and enrol “others into a collective project” (Bartley, 2007: 249).

From a *pragmatic* perspective, it can be argued that Chinese civil society practitioners primarily care about the level of inclusiveness of foreign and domestic foundations—that is, whether or not they provide funding, and if so, in what form. During years of capacity-building work in the PRC and as a participant observer, the author witnessed countless examples of Chinese civil society practitioners complaining about operating foundations that were unwilling to provide grants to Chinese CSOs. When discussing grant-making foundations, Chinese civil society practitioners were principally interested in the degree to which a foundation employed an instrumental and managerial approach, or whether it was willing to devolve power to CSO grantees based on the principles of subsidiarity and accountability. Arguably, the role of foundations is not just contested by the party-state, but also by Chinese CSOs. As contractual partners of foundations, Chinese CSOs have to protect their organisational autonomy if they do not want to become too donor-driven. This aspect of foundation-led civil society building in the PRC, however, has been woefully under-researched.

This article is thus an attempt to scrutinise foundations by identifying and commenting on their paradigmatic choices. New and innovative research approaches are required to capture the self-perceptions of foundations as their leading representatives articulate them. To this end, this article applies Hinton and Groves's (2004: 7) heuristic framework of critical and dynamic choices for aid actors. Whereas they subsume "non-governmental organizations (NGOs), bilateral donors, international finance institutions, national governments, [and] regional and local governments" (Hinton & Groves, 2004: 6) under the rubric "aid actor", this article concerns itself primarily with operating and grant-making foundations in the PRC. Hinton and Groves assert that the "choices being made and the behaviours displayed will shift at different times and in different contexts. For example, organizations may prioritize contrasting philosophical approaches and procedures at various moments in history. Building relationships with certain actors in the system may be emphasized at the expense of others, often in line with the perceived balance of power. Different significance may be given to different methodologies, values and accountability issues. Shifting organizational and resource pressures will also influence the choices being made" (Hinton & Groves 2004: 6).

This heuristic framework helps to distinguish between foundation representatives who either primarily subscribe to a paradigm of traditional charity, managerial philanthropy, or political philanthropy. It fills a gap in the foundation literature and helps explain how foreign and domestic foundations operate in the PRC under authoritarian conditions. The following discussion focuses on how foreign and domestic foundations in China have developed under vastly different regulatory frameworks. The review of their development trajectories, legal statuses and modes of operation will show that, despite facing political restrictions, foreign foundations have managed to carve out a niche in China. Domestic foundations, on the other hand, have been able to thrive due to an enabling policy environment.

China's Evolving Regulatory Framework: Political Restrictions, Legislative Progress?

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, direct funding support for non-governmental actors was still the exception rather than the rule, regardless of whether official bilateral and multilateral development agencies or foreign grant-making foundations provided the aid. At least 221 INGOs entered the PRC between 1978 and 2012. The majority of INGOs originated in the US (99), Hong Kong (35) and the UK (27) (China Development Brief, 2012: 10–11). Foreign foundations entered China in different ways and at different times. In 1979, the State Council invited the Ford Foundation (FF) to help rebuild China's higher education system; it established its own office in Beijing in 1988. The church-based foundation Misereor, on the other hand, chose to work through partner organisations in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. It established direct partnerships with mainland Chinese counterparts in 1995. Oxfam started working in the PRC in 1987 and set up its first field office in Kunming in 1992 (Oxfam, 2015).

Foreign support for non-state actors began to gather steam in the mid-1990s. A pivotal moment was the FF's facilitation of the NGO Forum alongside the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. It ushered in a new phase of mostly US-based foundations providing small-scale grants to Chinese grassroots organisations working on women's issues, poverty

alleviation and environmental protection. Such funding support for Chinese CSOs, however, was always “limited to functional issue areas or ‘low politics’” (Chen, 2012: 30–1). This also partly explains Anthony Spires’s findings on US funding for civil society projects between 2002 and 2009, whereby “a mere 5.61 per cent went to grassroots NGOs,” while “the ten projects receiving the largest grants were all government-run ministries, academies, and universities” (Fetter, 2013: 44–5). Chen et al. (2014: 8) suggest that GONGOs, initiated in a top–down manner, are the main beneficiaries of foreign funding. This suggests that while foreign foundations have generally been more willing to support Chinese CSOs than domestic foundations, such foreign funding support has also been limited in scope.

Since the ascent of the Xi/Li administration in 2012, an increasing number of oral and written directives aimed at curtailing the spread of liberal democratic ideas and practices have been issued in China. Document No. 9 is a case in point. This leaked internal party document was issued by the General Office of the Central Committee of the CCP (Central Office) in April 2013. It lashed out at “false ideological trends, positions and activities” (ChinaFile, 2013) ranging from constitutional democracy to civil society and historical nihilism. Such key prohibitions also found their way into the orally communicated policy, the “Seven Don’t Speaks”, in May 2013. This established, alongside others, “civil society” as a sensitive term (Bandurski, 2013). The thinking inherent in these policies and directives is also reflected in the Overseas NGO Law, which came into effect on 1 January 2017. It will require foreign funders to go through what could be an overly burdensome registration process in order to continue funding philanthropic activities in China (Fulda, 2016). Given that “the majority of Chinese grassroots NGOs rely heavily on funding from outside groups” (China Development Brief, 2013: xix), anxiety about the development of China’s civil society is understandable. There is palpable concern among many Chinese CSO practitioners that the remaining funders could retreat if they find it too burdensome to comply with the proposed regulatory changes. Against the backdrop of China’s economic rise and the subsequent dwindling of foreign support (Deng, 2013), Chinese CSOs are in the midst of what Alan Fowler (2003: 13) has called a “beyond-aid scenario”.

The Chinese party-state not only restricted the political space for civil society

building, but also developed its institutional framework by rewriting the regulations for foundations in 2004. Prior to this, only a small number of Chinese domestic foundations existed. A noticeable example was one of “China’s oldest and most successful charitable organizations” (Wielander, 2013: 71), the Amity Foundation, which was founded with the help of overseas churches in 1985. The Amity Foundation has a long track record of disaster relief and has been “engaged in scholarships and fostering orphans, public health and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, social welfare (including foster care projects and projects for the hearing impaired, the disabled and the elderly), community development and environmental protection” (2013: 72). Trail blazers such as the Amity Foundation showed reform-minded CCP cadres that domestic grant-making foundations could play an indispensable role in social development.

Subsequent legislative changes in 2004 reflected the need, socioeconomic potential and political will to let private Chinese foundations play a bigger role. Members of this new generation of Chinese foundation actors exhibit character traits that the existing political and legal conditions alone cannot explain. For example, various contextual factors strongly influence their behaviour towards domestic civil society actors, including a general lack of trust, the hands-on approach of successful Chinese entrepreneurs, as well as a specific Chinese cultural tradition of charity that emphasises generous giving by individuals and families. While so-called domestic public foundations have existed since the 1980s and 1990s, these mainly consist of organisations “with government backing and are therefore referred to as GONGOs” (Liu, [2009] 2011: 10). Since the State Council issued the “Regulations on the Management of Foundations” in 2004, another type of domestic foundation has emerged—so-called private foundations, which being unlicensed to raise funds publicly, are also called “non-public fundraising foundations”. According to the China Foundation Center (Jijinhui zhongxin wang), there are now 1478 public foundations licensed to engage in public fundraising. The total number of officially registered foundations in the PRC has risen from 737 in 2004 to 5,942 in June 2017 (Jijinhui zhongxin wang, 2017). A significant difference between foreign and domestic foundations can be seen in their modes of operation. Xu Yongguang, chairman of the NF, made the case that only about 3 per cent of private foundations in China developed into grant-making foundations (Xu, 2014: 277). Lai et al. (2015: 1091) have similarly criticised private foundations for a lack of “formal linkages

between China's growing grassroots NGO community and the country's new philanthropic institutions."

Why should we concern ourselves with philanthropy rather than charity? While charitable giving in China is an important topic in its own right, charitable foundations do not play a particularly prominent role in civil society building. As operating foundations, they implement their own projects and programmes and do not provide grants for external organisations. Anheier and Leat (2006: 4) have argued that "the charity approach makes a difference to those lucky enough to benefit from the service but, taken alone, has no impact beyond that." Chinese CSOs are excluded from their activities, further limiting the reach and significance of charitable foundations. In the case of the PRC, Lai et al. (2015: 1089–90) discovered that, among their research sample, 73.2 per cent of domestic private foundations are not yet willing to fund Chinese CSOs, but instead prefer to operate their own charitable programmes. Foreign philanthropic foundations, on the other hand, tend to be grant-making foundations. They are willing to form partnerships with Chinese CSOs that implement projects and programmes on their behalf. Porter and Kramer (1999) have argued that foundations "have the potential to make more effective use of scarce resources than either individual donors or the government. Free from political pressures, foundations can explore new solutions to social problems with an independence that government can never have."

Critical and Dynamic Choices for Foundations as Aid Actors

Recent regulatory changes in China's philanthropic sector will likely make it easier for domestic grant-making foundations and Chinese CSOs to engage in partnerships. China's new Charity Law is the latest sign of legislative progress aimed at helping domestic foundations to provide grants to CSOs deemed acceptable to the CCP (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2016). The new law is a ray of hope for China's civil society sector, since it "smooths the way for nonprofit groups to legally register and raise funds, but it also makes it legal for groups to exist even without registering. At the same time, it encourages more giving by improving tax incentives and making it easier for the wealthy to establish charitable trusts" (Chin, 2016). According to Priscilla Son,

“China’s new Charity Law will encourage a more sturdy model of contemporary giving, allowing for more charities to raise funds from the public without a complex registration system or a need for approval from the supervisory board and China’s Ministry of Civil Affairs” (The Borgen Project, 2016).

But how do foundation practitioners view the changing regulatory environment? How do they position their foundations in China’s complex web of governance? To find answers to these questions, the author conducted a series of interviews throughout the summer and autumn of 2014. Ten foreign and domestic foundation representatives agreed to have their interviews published in English and Chinese. These were the Sino-Ocean Charity Foundation (SOCF), Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS), One Foundation (OF), the China Charities Aid Foundation for Children (CCAFC), the Narada Foundation (NF), Misereor, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA), the SEE Foundation (SEE), Save the Children (StC) and Oxfam (see China Development Brief & Geneva Global, 2015). (For more information about the foundations, see the appendix.)

The participating grant-making foundations were chosen for their proven record of accomplishment in supporting China’s nascent civil society. Six of the featured grant-making foundations (Oxfam, Misereor, NF, OF, SEE, and CFPA) were mentioned in CDB’s list of the 15 most influential funders for Chinese CSOs in 2013 (China Development Brief, 2013a: xix–xx). Five of them (NF, CFPA, Misereor, StC and OXFAM) were also recipients of a CSO-initiated 2013 China Foundation Rankings Award that same year (Zhongguo jijinhui pingjiabang, 2013: 6). As such, the nine participating grant-making foundations can be seen as a “best-in-class” selection. The in-depth interviews with their representatives not only offer insights into a contested state–society relationship between the Chinese government and grant-making foundations, but also reveal the complex relationships at work among donors, foundations, CSOs and recipients. Three additional interviews, with the Chinese operating foundation, the Sino-Ocean Charity Foundation (SOCF), the GONGO China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO) and the capacity building CSO Huizeren were also published. While the sample size may seem small, the featured foundations operate in a wide range of activity fields and allow the author to draw a comprehensive picture of the changing landscape of grant-makers in China.

A New and Innovative Research Approach: Making Things Public

Research conducted for this article was inspired by the art exhibition “Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy”, which took place in Karlsruhe in 2005. Exhibition curators Latour and Weibel (cited in Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, 2005) pointed out that at “a time in which many people doubt and despair of politics it is crucial that they should not be fobbed off with standard political responses to contemporary problems but that the question of what actually constitutes politics should be raised anew.” The question of what constitutes politics is also highly relevant for this research, since in China, foundation representatives have been reluctant to address the political dimension of their work. The exhibition title “Making Things Public” was the inspiration to employ a new and highly innovative research approach which not only contributes to theory building, but also enhances practitioner reflexivity.

In the summer of 2014, the author spent one month in Beijing and visited foundation offices, conducted the interviews with foundation representatives and subsequently transcribed, translated—and most importantly—published the in-depth interviews in the spring of 2015. Prior to authorising the interview transcript, many foundation representatives obtained feedback from their colleagues, leading to revisions to the original transcripts. The fact that many interviews went through various iterations suggests that rather than just reflecting the views of one individual, the published interviews in fact are highly reflective of the respective foundation’s shared value propositions.²

When interviewees speak on record they are addressing at least two types of audiences: a domestic Chinese audience as well as a global audience. In addition, interviewees are also positioning themselves vis-à-vis other professionals in the field. The published interviews are of interest to global and

² The chosen research approach resembles Nicholas Loubere’s systematic and reflexive interviewing and reporting (SRIR) method. Similar to Loubere, the author “values a plurality of data, and undertakes data reduction during fieldwork through reflexive and collaborative dialogue” (2017). In stark contrast, however, the author considers the post-interview dialogue between interviewer and practitioner to be of key importance. When foundation representatives answer the semi-structured interview questions, they reflect on their organisational practices. Subsequent revisions to the interview scripts highlight contested areas of the respective foundation’s work in China.

domestic philanthropists, civil society practitioners, researchers, journalists, bloggers, diplomats, government officials—and more ominously—security personnel tasked with monitoring the activities of civil society actors in mainland China. Empirical analysis will show how the interviews led to surprising and counterintuitive results. Anyone can now read the interviews and probe claims made by the foundation representatives. In their published form, the interviews with leading foundation representatives have already enhanced foundation transparency—and by extension—have also strengthened foundation accountability.

Positions

Interviews with the foundation representatives typically revealed how close the foundation was to the CCP, and how stable this position was. This is best illustrated by the case of Oxfam Hong Kong, which the Chinese government allegedly blacklisted from 2003 onwards for its strategic decision to not cooperate with the party-state. It is an example of how a federated INGO got into trouble by asserting itself politically *against* the CCP. Oxfam Hong Kong's case supports Chinese civil society practitioner Zhai Yan's claim that in "terms of the stakeholders the Chinese government is still the most important one. If you do not manage this relationship well you could go down anytime" (Zhai, 2015).

During the field research, an informant told the author that Oxfam had managed to be removed from this blacklist in 2008. Instead of talking about this rather remarkable achievement, its China programme director, Howard Liu, simply asserted that Oxfam aims to position itself within society and "that we can have a very constructive cooperation with the Chinese government" (Liu, 2015). Dr Liu thus defined Oxfam as rooted in society, yet capable of engaging with the party-state. A substantial repositioning had therefore taken place in the past ten years.

Nevertheless, how did other interviewees position their foundations vis-à-vis the party-state, market and civil society? The interviews showed that foundations would collaborate exclusively with the party-state (SOCF), act as a

bridge between party-state and civil society actors (CFPA, StC, RBS), primarily support Chinese CSOs (NF, Misereor, Oxfam), or introduce management approaches into China's civil society sector (OF, SEE, CCAFC). The relative distance, or close proximity, of a given foundation to the party-state should be seen as only one of many yardsticks for critically assessing their roles. As networked organisations, foundations not only engage with government agencies but also relate to market and civil society actors. These relationships are not static, but change over time. Alan Fowler has described the fluid nature of the organisational relationship of what he terms "non-governmental development organizations" (NGDO) as the "fourth position". Fowler asserts that as value-driven organisations, grant-making foundations "use their value-base as a 'springboard' to interact with state, market, and civil society itself—which is far from homogeneous and is not inherently 'civil' or conflict free" (Fowler, 2003: 21). However, how can the "value bases" of foundations be assessed, and what is their particular understanding of philanthropy?

Paradigms

Foundations have different value propositions, visions and missions, as well as different theories of change which determine their philanthropic approaches. The author argues that foundation leaders hold considerable sway when it comes to positioning their organisations. This is why it is important to learn about their paradigmatic thinking. When analysing the interviews the author discerned three groups of foundation representatives, which either primarily followed a conventional charity, a managerial philanthropic, or a political philanthropic paradigm. In line with Lincoln/Guba, the author defines a paradigm to mean "a systemic set of beliefs" (1985: 15). The published interviews reveal the foundation representatives' "world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world" (Patton, 1978: 203). Hinton and Groves's heuristic framework, featuring nine criteria of critical and dynamic choices for foundations as aid actors, enabled the author to dissect the paradigmatic thinking of the interviewees. According to Hinton and Groves (2004: 6), identifying an aid actor's critical and dynamic choices across a wider spectrum is preferable to "classifying organizations into one fixed category". What follows is a brief overview of the three paradigms.

Table 1: Critical and Dynamic Choices for Foundations as Aid Actors

Criteria	Conventional Charity	Managerial Philanthropy	Political Philanthropy
1 Development Approach	Benevolence	“Participation” and “partnership”	Rights-based approaches
2 Development Methodology	Technical process	Social process	Political process
3 Core Concept or Value	Doing good	Effectiveness	People’s rights
4 Primary Stakeholders Perceived as:	Beneficiaries	Implementers	Citizens
5 Accountability	Upward accountability	Upward with some downward	Multiple accountabilities
6 Relationship: Aid Providers to Recipients	Paternal	Instrumental	Empowering
7 Procedures	Bureaucratic conformity	Acceptance of diversity	Negotiated process
8 Organisational Pressures	Pressure for disbursement	Disbursement and results	Results and impact
9 Philosophy of Change	Deterministic	Open system	Complex system

Note: Applied from Hinton and Groves (2004: 7).

A first group of foundation representatives who primarily subscribe to a conventional charity paradigm tend to depoliticise their work in China. They describe their development approach in terms of gift-giving, benevolence or welfare. Their preferred development methodology is based on technocratic thinking. Their core concept or value is to “do good”. Primary stakeholders are perceived as passive beneficiaries. In terms of accountability, the main focus is on upward accountability to institutional donors, taxpayers, or individual donors as foundation supporters. The relationship of aid providers to recipients is paternalistic and framed in the language of providing funds and assistance. Described organisational procedures suggest preference for bureaucratic conformity. Organisational pressures often relate to the need to spend allocated funding. The underlying philosophy of change is a deterministic and closed system.

A second group of foundation representatives primarily follows a managerial philanthropic paradigm. They are less concerned with whether they are doing the “right thing”, and instead tend to focus on their performance. Such foundation practitioners espouse private-sector values centred around efficiency and effectiveness. In terms of the preferred development approach, “participation” and “partnership” are used in constructivist terms. The development methodology is framed as an emergent social process. Primary stakeholders are perceived as implementers. There is a focus on upward accountability, but also the recognition of some downward accountability towards their grantees. In terms of the relationship between the aid provider and recipients, the latter are seen as instrumental to the implementation of specific programmes. Interviewees describe organisational procedures that are more accepting of diversity. Organisational pressures exist in the form of finding an appropriate balance between pressures for grant disbursement and results. The underlying philosophy of change, however, is an open system which still does not recognize the world’s complexity.

A third and final group of foundation representatives are primarily wedded to a political philanthropic paradigm. They acknowledge the political dimension of their work, and are highly reflective of their organisation’s practices. Being political is not seen as confrontational or anti-state. Instead, such proponents are acutely aware of the inherent power imbalance between grant-makers and

CSO grantees. Interviews are used to highlight their foundation's commitment to rights-based approaches. The development methodology is seen as a transformative political process, albeit not one that is geared towards regime change. Primary stakeholders are not portrayed as passive recipients or instrumental partners, but as citizens in their own right. Foundation representatives following a political philanthropic paradigm are mindful of their organisation's multiple lines of accountability, which are upward, downward, and horizontal (e.g. vis-à-vis international human rights monitors and other communities of practice). In terms of the relationship of the aid provider to recipients, the focus is on empowering people and influencing governments. Organisational procedures are portrayed as a negotiated process. Organisational pressures exist in the form of attaining results and impact assessment. The underlying philosophy of change is a complex, non-deterministic open system.

The interviews revealed that SOCF is the only organisation that primarily follows the conventional charity paradigm. The other nine foreign and domestic grant-making foundation representatives revealed either a primarily managerial (RBS, OF, CCAFC, NF), or a primarily political (Misereor, CFPA, SEE, StC, Oxfam), understanding of philanthropy. The author uses the qualifying term "primarily" to emphasise that foundation representatives do not necessarily subscribe to one of the three paradigms to the full extent. Instead, and as the empirical discussion will show, they occasionally represent their foundation by referring to criteria related to the other two paradigms.

The fluidity of foundation representatives' paradigmatic thinking is best illustrated by the interview with Mr Kantelhardt from Misereor. Kantelhardt shied away from the language of rights-based approaches. Misereor also seemed to have an instrumental view of public participation. And yet on balance, the author learned that in the PRC, Misereor primarily follows a political philanthropic paradigm. This became evident when reviewing Kantelhardt's interview answers. Kantelhardt presented Misereor's development approach in conventional charitable ways. When addressing the criteria of development methodology, core concept or value, and accountability, Misereor appeared to follow a managerial philanthropic paradigm. Yet when addressing the relationship between the aid provider and

recipients, organisational procedures, organisational pressures, and philosophy of change, it became very clear that Misereor in fact follows a political philanthropic paradigm.

When reviewing each of the interviews in detail, the author was struck by how little the nationality, ethnicity or cultural background of the respective foundation representative mattered in terms of the interviewee's paradigmatic thinking. It was a reminder that while foreign and domestic foundations are subject to different regulatory regimes, in terms of reported organisational practices, foreign and domestic foundations actually overlap in very significant ways.

How did the foundation representatives describe the *development approach* of their organisations? A majority of them argued that their foundation's work in the PRC was based on "participation" and "partnership" (OF, CCAFC, SEE, CFP, RBS). Only Liu Zhouhong from the Narada Foundation, Howard Liu from Oxfam, and Perrine Lhuillier from StC framed their interviews in the more explicit language of rights-based approaches. Duan Tao, from SOCF, and Wolf Kantelhardt, from Misereor, subscribed to the development approach of gift giving, benevolence and welfare.

The second criterion of *development methodology* helps shed light on the foundations' working practices. None of the representatives described their foundation's work in terms of a transformative political process. In an authoritarian political context, such caution is not surprising. Instead, all interviewees made the case that their development methodology is informed by an emergent social process; only SOCF revealed a more technical and blueprint-oriented understanding of its work.

The third criterion of *core concepts or values* is useful for discerning the "value base" of foreign and domestic foundations. Here, a more mixed picture emerged. In the case of foreign foundations, Shieh and Knutson identified distinct motivations among INGOs that ranged from religious impulses and humanitarian and ecological concerns to philanthropic ambitions (China Development Brief, 2012: 5). There is less clarity, however, about value orientations among Chinese foundations (Liu, [2010] 2011: 43). The

developmental nature of domestic grant-making foundations thus makes it difficult to compare and contrast the varying foundations' guiding "axiomatic values or ethics" (Edwards & Sen, 2000: 606). The interviews reveal a fairly even split between foundation representatives who emphasise people's rights (CCAFC, NF, Oxfam, StC) and those who focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of their work (OF, SEE, SOCF, CFPA, Misereor). Only Oliver Radtke (2015) framed the work of the Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS) in terms of "doing good".

The fourth criterion, the *perceptions of primary stakeholders*, allows us to identify how foundation representatives view "end users" in their philanthropic work. Primary stakeholders can be understood either as implementers or passive beneficiaries. However, the vast majority of foundation representatives saw primary stakeholders as citizens (SEE, NF, CFPA, Oxfam, RBS, Misereor, StC); only two framed them as implementers (OF, CCAFC). Again, SOCF proved to be an outlier in terms of framing primary stakeholders as beneficiaries.

The fifth criterion helps to unearth the foundation representatives' views on the *primary lines of accountability* for their organisations. The interviews again reveal a uniform picture. Two foundation representatives argued that their organisations have to be "upward accountable"—to institutional donors, taxpayers and individual donors as foundation supporters (SOCF, NF). While this view was generally shared by other representatives, many suggested that in addition to upward accountability, there also needs to be some downward accountability, particularly to their grantees and primary stakeholders (OF, CCAFC, SEE, CFPA, RBS, Misereor, StC). Howard Liu, from Oxfam, went further than his counterparts by acknowledging their multiple accountabilities, both upwards and downwards.

The sixth criterion, the *relationship between aid providers and their recipients*, again puts the spotlight on the relative position of foundations vis-à-vis their cooperating partners. From the interviews, two different camps emerged. Some openly acknowledged their foundation's ambition to influence the Chinese government and to empower Chinese people (SEE, CFPA, Oxfam, StC), while others saw the recipients as instrumental in implementing specific programmes (OF, CCAFC, NF, RBS, Misereor). Wolf Kantelhardt is a case in point. He suggests that public participation is important "in order to make a project successful. ...

It is a means to an end” (Kantelhardt, 2015). Again, only SOCF provided funds and assistance itself, rather than devolving power to its cooperation partners. Duan Tao makes the case that “[we] do not simply give money to an organisation. Instead we are in charge of overall planning and organisation and bringing all of the resources together” (Duan, 2015).

Nevertheless, how did foundation representatives reflect on their *organisational procedures*? This seventh criterion addresses how the internal governance of foundations is likely to affect their ability to engage with other stakeholders. When reflecting on their organisational procedures, some representatives described these as a negotiated process aimed at achieving innovation and flexibility based on sociocultural sensitivity and knowledge (SEE, CFPA, Oxfam, Misereor, StC). Others showed a fair amount of acceptance of diversity in their work (OF, CCAFC, NF, RBS). SOCF again shows a great deal of bureaucratic conformity, which is evident in its decision to form partnerships almost exclusively with party-state organisations’ youth programmes, such as the Communist Youth League or the Ideological and Political Secretariat of the Ministry of Education. At no point does Duan Tao seem to mind that the SOCF’s exclusive choice of partners was likely to strengthen the party-state at the expense of other stakeholders. This example shows that, in foundations, micropolitics determines “who gets what, when, how” (Lasswell, 1936).

The discussion so far has illustrated that the distinction between foundation representatives following the charity paradigm and the managerial philanthropic paradigm is fairly clear. There is arguably greater overlap between the managerial and political philanthropic paradigm. The key criteria which sets the two paradigms apart is the relationship of the aid provider to the recipient. Here, the question of power takes centre stage.

Power

Whether a project should belong to a foundation (because of its role as a donor), or be seen as the property of CSOs (because, after all, it implements the initiative), highlights the tension between donorship and ownership. Are grant-making foundations aware of the unequal power relationship that exists

between donor and recipient (Brest & Harvey, 2008: 83)? If they are, how do they deal with the issue of power imbalances in their grant-making processes?

Brest and Harvey (2008: 83) argued that “no relationship is more important to a philanthropist than his or her relationship with a grantee.” They then provided an extensive list of the ways in which grant-makers can sour this relationship. For instance, they can do so by being unresponsive or abusive; by raising false expectations among potential grantees, who put in considerable work to present a grant proposal; by following cumbersome due diligence processes that overburden applicants or grantees; and/or by abruptly leaving an existing field of grant-making (Brest & Harvey, 2008: 83–4). Orosz has formulated some of the “necessary qualities for fitness as a grant-maker” (Orosz, 2000: 48), which include an emphasis on integrity, people skills, analytical ability, creativity, spirituality, balance, a sense of proportion and compassion (Orosz, 2000: 48–52).

In her interview, the founder and director of Huizeren, a Beijing-based capacity building CSO, issued a scathing critique of Chinese corporate donors and domestic grant-making foundations. She described them as utilitarian in their approach to CSOs, having a neocolonial mindset and undermining CSO autonomy through unreasonable grant conditionality (Zhai, 2015). Her critique is mirrored in the Chinese CSOs’ 20 documented complaints published in the aforementioned 2013 Foundation Rankings Award brochure. Chinese CSO practitioners expressed their misgivings about grant-making foundations. Among these reservations were excessive donorship, arrogance, unprofessional behaviour, unrealistic resource allocation, low overheads, letting CSOs carry unreasonable financial risks, ineffective project and financial management, and lack of domestic support for legal aid and the rule-of-law. They also included broken promises, the sudden cessation of funding, stolen project designs, taking undue credit for CSO work, unclear property rights and unfair assessment of CSO grantees (Zhongguo jijinhui pingjiabang, 2013: 32–35). Many specific criticisms were explicitly levelled at domestic grant-making foundations, while others included foreign foundations. Chinese civil society practitioners have also criticised domestic foundations for being unprofessional, for being too informal and for acting arbitrarily (Liu, [2009] 2011: 16).

In the interviews, foundation representatives subscribing to a managerial philanthropic paradigm emphasised the grant-maker's donorship (NF, OF, CCAFC). Liu Zhouhong, from the Narada Foundation, stated that "grantees need to share the same goals as we do" (Liu, 2015). Foundation representatives wedded to a political philanthropic paradigm, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of the grantees' ownership (Misereor and StC). Alternatively, they saw donorship and ownership as a negotiated process between grant-maker and grantee (SEE, CFPA, Oxfam). In the words of Wang Yi from the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, "you need to want to do the project, and I need to also want to do the project. If only one of us wants to do the project, there might be no way for us to come together" (Wang, 2015). Different attitudes to donorship and ownership thus provided a glimpse into the "value bases" of foreign and domestic foundations.

The eighth criterion, *organisational pressures*, helps to illustrate how foundation representatives perceive constraints in their work. Interviewees either acknowledged the existing pressure for results and impact assessment (OF, CCAFC, SEE, NF, CFPA, Oxfam, Misereor, StC), or suggested that a balance needed to be found between pressures for disbursement and results (SOCF, RBS).

Finally, foundation representatives also reflected on their respective organisation's *philosophy of change*—the ninth and final criterion—which the majority (OF, CCAFC, SEE, NF, CFPA, Oxfam, Misereor, StC) defined in the context of a complex, non-deterministic and open system. That SOCF and RBS preferred to have government agencies as their main cooperation partners suggested that these foundations aimed to achieve change within the narrow confines of the party-state, without entertaining the possibility of contributing to a more autonomous civil society. Li Hong subscribed to a developmental perspective by stating that One Foundation programmes were providing "a hatching and nurturing opportunity for ... NGOs to grow" (Li, 2015). Meanwhile, Liu Jingtao, from CCAFC, espoused a more prescriptive philosophy of change. According to Liu, CCAFC encourages CSO-led public participation, calls on more private foundations to join its United Way programme, and advocates introducing legal changes to allow foundations to register more easily and to engage in public fundraising (Liu, 2015). Other domestic foundation

representatives (NF, CFPA) echoed the call to relax governmental curbs on foundations and CSOs engaging in public fundraising. However, SEE called for the redistribution of risks and for wealthy or resourceful Chinese citizens to bear greater social and environmental responsibility (Guo, 2015). Both Oxfam and Misereor took a distinctive bottom-up approach—one that either focused on rights-based approaches, as in the case of Oxfam (Liu, 2015), or one that emphasised the importance of individual citizens becoming more active in their local communities, as in the case of Misereor (Kantelhardt, 2015). The emphasis on the individual was also at the heart of RBS operations in China (Radtke, 2015). StC, on the other hand, stressed the value of bringing in international expertise and good practices. It advocated a philosophy of change that included building the capacity of people, system strengthening and organisational capacity building for CSOs, and policy advocacy (Lhuillier, 2015).

Conclusion

The review of development trajectories, legal statuses and modes of operation showed that foreign foundations managed to carve out a niche in China despite political restrictions. Domestic foundations, on the other hand, were able to thrive due to an enabling policy environment. They took advantage of the 2004 foundation regulations and could exponentially enlarge their financial resource base with the help of public fundraising licences. China's Overseas NGO Law, as well as the Charity Law, will open further avenues for domestic foundations to grow at the expense of foreign foundations.

The empirical part of this article reflected on the views of foundation representatives on foundation positions, paradigms and power. The interviews revealed that foundation representatives subscribed to either a managerial (RBS, OF, CCAFC, NF) or a political (Misereor, CFPA, SEE, StC, Oxfam) understanding of philanthropy. This suggests that in the foreseeable future, two groups of philanthropic foundations will coexist—an emerging group of managerial philanthropists aiming to introduce management approaches to China's civil society sector, and more politically minded philanthropists aiming to bridge the gap between party-state and civil society actors. One of the greatest legacies of international giving to China's civil society has been human

capital, namely the local people who are now leaders of organisations across China, who have learned a great deal from the exchange of models and information with foreign funders and implementers (Fulda, 2016). It is therefore encouraging to see that domestic grant-making foundations, such as SEE and CFPA, the latter being a modernising GONGO, have already developed into highly reflective organisations that are capable of continuous adaptation and organisational learning. The interviews with Guo Xia and Wang Yi are indicative of the long journey that some domestic foundations have taken in a relatively short space of time.

Applying Hinton and Groves's heuristic framework of critical and dynamic choices for foundations as aid actors allowed the author to discern the paradigmatic thinking among interviewed foundation representatives. When applying this heuristic framework, the author learned that interviewees generally erred on the side of caution. Mindful of the shadow of the Chinese party-state, interviewees de-emphasised the political nature of their work. After concluding one of the interviews, a foundation representative admitted to the author that the interviewee had deliberately presented the foundation in managerial rather than political terms, and suggested that this was to protect the foundation in politically challenging times.

The research conducted in 2014 has revealed a foundation field in transition. As China's Overseas NGO law has come into effect on 1 January 2017, the foundation landscape is likely to evolve even further. Future research will have to investigate the impacts of the law on foundations and their grantees. How will foreign foundations cope under the new regulatory regime? Will they divest from the PRC, seeing the new regulations as too burdensome? If significant numbers of foreign foundations were to leave China, will more domestic foundations become grant-makers for Chinese CSOs? And how will the law affect the foreign foundations that remain active in China? Will they become more conventional or managerial, in terms of their paradigmatic choices? Or will the law trigger a politicisation of the foundation field?

This research aimed to address a gap in the literature that so far has largely ignored the foundation–CSO relationship in the PRC. A new and innovative conceptual approach was employed to study foreign and domestic foundations

operating under authoritarian conditions. This research can lead to a new paradigm in foundation research since it overcomes the current tendency to treat domestic and foreign foundations as separate—and thus seemingly incomparable—entities. Since the political space available for civil society in countries as disparate as India, Israel, Russia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Cambodia is increasingly being restricted by draconian NGO laws (Fulda, 2017), the question of convergence and divergence between foreign and domestic foundations can now also be analysed in other regional contexts. The successful application of this framework in the case of the PRC can help set the research agenda for future foundation research. Comparative social and political scientists should feel encouraged to use the new concepts and research approaches, and to apply them to their own research on foreign and domestic foundations in other authoritarian contexts.

Appendix: Foundation Profiles

Sino-Ocean Charity Foundation (SOCF)

This private foundation received an endowment of ¥2 million in 2008 from the property development company Sino-Ocean Land. In 2014, its parent company held net assets of ¥132 billion. The Sino-Ocean Charity Foundation aims to educate its staff about issues relating to education and environmental protection through its own CSR projects. In its education projects, SOCF primarily collaborates with the Communist Youth League and the Ideological and Political Secretariat of the Ministry of Education. The latter party-state organs provide access to schools and universities. There is very limited cooperation with selected GONGOs and INGOs—six CSOs in 2011 and four in 2013. SOCF is not licensed to engage in public fundraising.

Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS)

This German industry foundation was established in 1964 with the mission to engage in the fields of health, international relations, society, education, culture and science. In 2013, the Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBS) held net assets of €5.23 billion, with €36.11 billion in operating reserves. The foundation's China

engagement started with the establishment of a focus on German–Chinese relations in 2006. By 2013, RBS had spent €1.86 million on 12 projects in this focus area. RBS engages with government agencies, grassroots NGOs, GONGOs and universities in the PRC through German intermediaries such as the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH or Stiftung Asienhaus. Support for Chinese grassroots NGOs is provided primarily through an exchange programme for European and Chinese NGO personnel. RBS is not licensed to engage in public fundraising in the PRC.

One Foundation (OF)

Established with an endowment of ¥50 million in 2010, the One Foundation engages in the areas of safety/disasters, children, voluntarism, mental health and philanthropy development. It was the first private foundation to be registered as an independent public charitable fundraising organisation in the PRC. In 2014, its net assets were ¥408 million. The same year, it raised ¥168 million from 4,470,000 individual donors as well as 88 corporate and government donors. In 2014, the OF spent ¥224 million, with the vast majority of it going to grants for disaster relief (¥199,125,178) and the remainder spent on philanthropy development (¥15,469,156) and child welfare (¥9,520,952). It supports both GONGOs and grassroots NGOs. About 600 grassroots NGOs have been supported annually between 2011 and 2013. OF provides seed funding for CSOs.

China Charities Aid Foundation for Children (CCAFC)

The China Charities Aid Foundation for Children was established in 2009 with an endowment of ¥20 million. It is primarily active in the fields of education, medical care, youth, children, poverty alleviation, mental health and philanthropy development. It emphasises service delivery and promotes a Chinese variation of the US-based fundraising approach, United Way. CCAFC is licensed to engage in public fundraising. In 2014 it raised ¥94.65 million. Individual donors raised 56 per cent; the remaining 44 per cent came from corporate donors. CCAFC spent all the funds it raised on grants for independent projects (¥49,320,500), special funds (¥40,476,100) and cooperation projects (¥4,856,900). It supports GONGOs and grassroots NGOs. In 2014 it had 300

grantees, 90 per cent of which were grassroots NGOs and 10 per cent GONGOs. Seed funding for Chinese CSOs is planned for the future.

Narada Foundation (NF)

The Narada Foundation was established in 2007 with an endowment of ¥100 million. Its activity areas include education, youth entrepreneurship, safety/disasters, voluntarism and philanthropy development. In 2014 it held net assets worth ¥132 million. The NF is not licensed to engage in public fundraising. In 2014, it spent most of its ¥28 million income on its disaster reconstruction fund (¥10,000,000), macro-level projects (¥2,584,516), strategic projects (¥2,040,000), specific public interest projects (¥3,180,010) and research projects (¥268,274). While the NF claims to support grassroots NGOs, the number of individual grantees is actually limited. For example, there have been 67 Ginkgo Fellows since 2010 and a few selected grassroots NGOs, but only four new CSOs were supported by the Bright Way Programme in 2014. Narada is also the China Foundation Centre's principal sponsor.

Misereor

Established in 1958, this German Catholic grant-making foundation is active in the fields of poverty alleviation, community development, education, social work, policy advocacy and public education. In 2013, Misereor held net assets of €99.9 million, with operating reserves of €66.5 million. The same year most of its income of €179.3 million was raised from German federal government donors (€115.1 million), whereas the remainder came from individual donors (€54.3 million). In 2014, Misereor spent three million euros on 65 projects in the PRC, which included 25 new projects. The funding ratio is about 1:1:1 in terms of its support for church-based organisations such as dioceses (33 per cent), grassroots NGOs (33 per cent), as well as GONGOs and research institutes at universities (33 per cent). In the PRC, Misereor emphasises service provision and individual empowerment. It is not licensed to engage in public fundraising in the PRC.

China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)

One of Misereor's key cooperation partners, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, was established with an endowment of ¥10 million in 1989. It operates in the fields of education, medical care, agriculture, rural areas and farmers, safety/disasters, women, children, international affairs and poverty alleviation. In 2014, it held net assets of ¥2.21 billion. CFPA is licensed to engage in public fundraising. In 2014 its financial income amounted to ¥3.51 billion, including micro-credits. Some ¥613 million was raised through donations. That same year, CFPA spent ¥410 million (without micro-credits) or ¥2.57 billion (with micro-credits). CFPA has supported grassroots NGOs and individuals through micro-credit schemes. From August 2013 until the end of December 2014, it supported CSOs through 35 philanthropic projects amounting to ¥6.22 million. CFPA does not provide seed funding for CSOs.

SEE Foundation (SEE)

The SEE Foundation was established in 2008 with an endowment of ¥8 million. In 2014, its net assets were ¥47.19 million. It engages in the fields of the environment, scientific research and philanthropy development. It is licensed to engage in public fundraising. In 2014, it raised ¥42.98 million from individual donors and ¥5.76 million from other foundations. Almost all the money it raised was allocated to grants for combatting desertification (¥21,480,416), specific environmental protection projects (¥19,243,368) and environmental public participation projects (¥6,548,078). With its emphasis on environmental protection and philanthropy development, SEE has supported both GONGOs and grassroots NGOs. Most of its 1,000 grantees have been grassroots NGOs. It provides seed funding for CSOs, for example, Green House Plan (¥200,000 per year for 70 CSOs since 2012).

Save the Children (StC)

Save the Children is a grant-making foundation with a very long organisational history. Established in 1919, it focuses on humanitarian aid, education, child poverty, child welfare, hunger and child protection. In 2013, its endowment stood at £2.92 million, while it boasted an operation surplus of £34.76 million.

While StC is not licensed to engage in public fundraising within the PRC, in 2013 it raised £109.71 million from individual donors, and £186.92 million from institutional grants globally. That same year it spent £267.17 million worldwide. In the PRC, it allocated £7.59 million to grants for child education (39.3 per cent), child health (24.5 per cent), disaster risk reduction and emergency (18.2 per cent), child protection (17.7 per cent), and child rights governance (0.3 per cent). StC supports grassroots NGOs, GONGOs, government agencies and universities. Support for Chinese CSOs excludes seed funding.

Oxfam Hong Kong

Oxfam Hong Kong was established in 1976. Operating under a highly federated structure, it has been engaging the PRC since 1987. In mainland China, Oxfam Hong Kong is primarily concerned with poverty alleviation, development, humanitarian aid, policy advocacy and public education. In the financial year 2013/14, Oxfam Hong Kong-restricted funds amounted to HK\$8.4 million, and its operating reserves that year were HK\$169.7. It generated an income of HK\$255.9 million, of which HK\$110 million was spent on 620 projects in the PRC, which included 211 new projects. Oxfam Hong Kong supports grassroots NGOs, GONGOs, government agencies and universities. Its 620 projects and programmes are implemented with the help of 266 partners in 24 provinces. Support for Chinese CSOs includes seed funding.

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Andreas Fulda is Assistant Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham. He would like to thank Jennifer Brady, Edmund Cheng, Horst Fabian, Fu Tao, Gerhard Fulda, Elizabeth Knup, Nicola Macbean, Flora Sapio, and Patrick Schroeder, as well as the anonymous reviewers, for comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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It All Started on a Train in China in 1976...

Don Rimmington

President of BACS 1976-1977 and 1986-1988

A delegation of young British academics in Chinese Studies visited China early in April of that year under the auspices of the British Council. Some of us were not that young, but we all had a youthful enthusiasm for the trip, since access to China over the previous ten years of the Cultural Revolution had generally not been possible. There were fourteen of us, six representing the Chinese Studies departments of the time with the remainder being individual scholars working on China in history and social sciences departments. The leader of the delegation was John Gittings, who had previously been an academic in the Chinese Studies Department of the Central London Polytechnic (Westminster University), but who was by then the China correspondent for the *Guardian* newspaper.

When we assembled at Heathrow, it was the first time a number of us had ever met. We had a wide range of expertise on China between us, from language and literature to history, politics and economics, and we were going to be able to pool our knowledge and skills during the forthcoming visit. The standard of our spoken Chinese varied considerably, but this enabled the not so fluent amongst us to prepare questions for our Chinese hosts while others were battling to interpret the various forms of Chinese we encountered. One enthusiastic historian was observed on the flight to Hong Kong ploughing through a large Chinese-English dictionary in an effort to improve his command of the spoken language. Whether it worked or not, it was evidence of a commitment to the task in hand.

The morning after we reached Hong Kong, all of a sudden, doubts were raised about whether we would be able to go up to Beijing at all. The previous day had been the Qingming Festival and we had read reports of a surge in popular expressions of grief in the capital for Premier Zhou Enlai, who had died earlier in the year. Huge crowds had gathered in Tiananmen Square to witness the tributes to Zhou, which took the form of wreathes and poems placed at the foot of the Monument to the People's Heroes. What we didn't know was that the Square was being forcibly cleared by the authorities and that Deng Xiaoping had been dismissed from office.

Despite all these upheavals the visit went ahead and we arrived early that evening in a very tense Beijing. We were staying in the Peking Hotel and a number of us immediately went out for a walk to find Chang'an Boulevard deserted apart from the presence of plain clothes personnel. The next day, access to Tiananmen Square was prohibited, and it was filled with a large number of street cleaning tankers, which drove up and down spraying the ground with water. An endless procession of demonstrators paraded past Tiananmen itself shouting slogans denouncing Deng Xiaoping.

Although we had a wide range of analytical skills among us, it was impossible to say what exactly was going on, but it did seem that the Gang of Four was reasserting itself. The Chinese officials who travelled with us throughout our visit were in an extremely difficult position, declining diplomatically to offer any explanations of what was going on around us. I remember that we politely listened to a presentation at Beijing University, ignoring a noisy student demonstration that was going on outside the window. Events later in the year with the death of Mao and the fall of the Gang of Four would introduce major developments in China, but the "Tiananmen Incident" we witnessed could be said to be the starting point for these changes.

After three days in the capital we took the train south for a week's tour through Nanjing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The atmosphere in the southern cities was not as fraught as it had been in Beijing, but there were echoes everywhere of the Tiananmen events. Nonetheless, our stalwart guides conducted us to a range of academic institutions and places of interest. The hospitality was lavish and virtually every evening there was a sumptuous

banquet with copious amounts of alcohol (*maotai*, beer and wine), which was enjoyed in full not only by us but also by our hosts. This high living was in marked contrast to much of the drab world we could see around us. In Nanjing, we were taken to see the bridge over the Yangzi, which had been completed a few years before and in which there was understandably great pride. Two photographs were taken of our group with our hosts and, looking at them now, the striking thing about them is that the bridge behind us was deserted apart from a couple of army trucks and the odd cyclist. China was somewhat different from the place it is today.

It was on the first leg of the journey from Beijing to Nanjing that we began to discuss the proposition of setting up some form of professional association. For a number of years, there had been a European Association of Chinese Studies (originally referred to as the “Junior Sinologists”), and its annual conference was always held in a different country across Europe, including Britain. Its activities tended to focus on Chinese departments, and we felt there was room for a separate British association, which could attract people working on China from across the academic world and beyond. By the end of the trip, our ideas had firmed up and we decided to call a meeting at SOAS in the following summer to discuss the idea. To our surprise, a large number of people turned up. They came from the academic world, both staff and postgraduates, and from diplomatic and business circles. The response was extremely positive, and I seem to remember that there was unanimous support for the proposal to set up an association. Before we knew where we were, we had elected an executive committee that was empowered to explore possibilities.

Over the following months, the committee held regular meetings at SOAS, and we felt our way towards establishing a basic structure covering membership, finance and communications. We needed to set up charitable status and received helpful guidance from the Charity Commission. We also made contact with the Chinese Embassy and the Taiwan Representative Office, and these diplomatic links have been maintained to this day. All this required considerable detailed work (in the days of no electronic mail and no websites), and a great deal of credit should go to our first Secretary, David Chambers, for his methodical and good-humoured approach.

A major task was to make arrangements for the first formal conference of the Association at the end of the following summer. It was held at Oxford University and we had no difficulty in attracting a large number of participants for a full programme of lectures. The only disappointment was that Dr Joseph Needham was unable to accept our invitation to attend, though he did send a letter of support. The occasion was clearly enjoyed by all present and the Association was formally established at the Business Session. The Executive Committee stood down to allow the extended membership as a whole to choose our successors. It is a measure of the enthusiasm for the new Association that two senior academics put their names forward for the position of Chairman and an election had to be held.

Over the years, members of the original 1976 group were active in the Association and five of them served as Presidents. The range of interests of the group across Chinese Studies—modern and classical, sinological and social science, linguistic and literary—have been encompassed by the Association. However, compared with the modest initiatives of those early years, the activities of BACS on behalf of its members have expanded enormously to include liaison with government bodies and funding agencies, the support and promotion of postgraduate studies, and the encouragement of Chinese language studies at all levels, as well as the production of its own publication.

The changes in China we have seen over the last forty years have obviously had an impact on the work of the Association, but one particular thing I noticed at the recent anniversary meeting was the presence of a large number of scholars from China. BACS in its early days had a mainly Western membership, but the arrival of so many Chinese students in the UK in recent decades has clearly expanded and enhanced the quality of the Association. The atmosphere of the anniversary occasion seemed to me to be as positive as that at our first gathering in 1976, and bodes well for the future development of the Association.

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Negotiating Politics and Academia

Stephan Feuchtwang

President of BACS 1999-2002

We had the example of the previous tour arranged by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, UK professors of Chinese. They had a very Cold War-era mistrust of their hosts. We, younger and junior sinologists, would be more polite. This was in April 1976, during the last throes of Jiang Qing and her gang; they issued denunciations of Deng Xiaoping and implicitly of Zhou Enlai, who had just died and been passionately mourned by spontaneous crowds. We witnessed the contrasting spectacle of work units trucked in to parade official denunciation in a state of high tension that lasted for our whole three-week tour. We kept up good relations with our hosts and among each other. Towards the end of the tour some of us, on a train journey—others, including me, in other compartments, perhaps not just literally—thought about starting a British Association for Chinese Studies. I joined later and eventually served as President, in 1999-2002, some twenty years after it was founded. I thought it might be interesting to record briefly, from my experience, the Cold War atmosphere out of which we were emerging when BACS was formed.

My experience was that of an anti-war activist at the time of the war in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. After graduating from Oxford with a degree in Chinese in 1961, I had the odd politics of someone who wrote under a pseudonym a (published) article against Jiang Jieshi's military dictatorship, was in favour of the independence of Formosa, as the Taiwanese activists called it, and read the *Communist Manifesto* behind a brown paper bag while travelling on the London Underground. I had been working as an assistant in Collett's Chinese bookshop and art store, opposite the British Museum. We sold imports from the PRC, including Foreign Languages Press publications. Two further years

later, after a master's degree in anthropology, and learning Taiwanese at Cornell in preparation for fieldwork, I took part in marches against the US support of what I understood to be another military dictatorship in Vietnam. But my main interest was in poetry, ritual and religion, and I enjoyed fieldwork in Taiwan in 1966-68 without hindrance or too much concern with, let alone attention to, the military dictatorship or single-party rule, except for local elections. But on my return to a job in the SOAS Anthropology Department I was driven to enquire into the bigger context, into political economy, which included both my circumstances and those that I had entered in Taiwan. In the 1960s, political economy could be a disguise-name for Marxism. Open scholarly interest in, let alone teaching about Marx, capitalism, and imperialism were forbidden by the Cold War conventions of the time, even though there were in fact a few anti-imperialist and communist full-time staff teaching at SOAS. In this curious situation we leftist staff, and a core of students in the Students' Union, formed groups both for the extra-curricular study of Marx and theories of imperialism, and for activities opposing US imperialism, in particular the bombing of Cambodia. Some of us formed the UK Association for Radical East Asian Studies (AREAS) in 1970, which was the more left-wing, sometimes openly socialist, equivalent to the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars in the USA formed two years before. The CCAS was better funded and larger, and soon launched the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, while we published occasional pamphlets, then booklets, on the secret CIA war in Laos (Gestetner-machine-printed and stapled), on Japanese imperialism (which became a Penguin book by Gavan McCormack and Jon Halliday), on Hong Kong by Walter Easey (Spokesman Books), by Feiling Davies on the Cultural Revolution, and more.

By the mid-seventies, I had been kicked out of SOAS, formally for not publishing enough to pass my probation, and the momentum of AREAS had gone. Instead, the study of imperialism became one of the topics of the London China Seminar that I started and kept going with many people's help in SOAS, a kind of avenging presence, for 25 years. I had scorned ambition for a career beyond doing my research and teaching well, in favour of left-wing activism. But I was persuaded to join my professional association, the Association of Social Anthropologists of the British Commonwealth, so that it could help me by setting up a committee under Raymond Firth to investigate the claims SOAS made about me as reasons for not renewing my contract. It reported in 1972-3

that I was an anthropologist of good standing, but this was not enough to change the Director's mind. It did impress me. It warmed my heart that a professional association, even though it was not a union, could do this.

We were not on either side of the Cold War antagonists, Soviet or US, so-called Communist or so-called Free, but wanted a way to think politically and economically from the point of view of the exploited and oppressed, and to be both scholarly and politically engaged on their side. By 1977, when BACS was formed, this was still so. BACS was a professional association. Politically, the best that could be said about it was that it did not represent an establishment, nor was it dependent on funding from any state. In fact, from its subscription coffer, it provided funds for some of the small costs of running the London China Seminar, which after the sessions on imperialism, was not on any political path except that of taking seriously the challenges of studying the People's Republic of China instead of simply avoiding the challenge with distaste, or of studying in order to condemn.

As President, my fellow committee members and I were occupied with what have become perennial BACS preoccupations. Our future, namely the organisation of research students and their own conference, was one. Then there was defence and joint lobbying against the ever-acute threat of cuts and closures of departments that taught exotic languages. And the opposite, helping to expand the teaching of Chinese in schools. All these seemed to be precarious issues at the time, but have since become more secure and regular parts of BACS responsibilities, except for the ever-increasing loss of the teaching of classical Chinese. This is now a crucial last line of defence for BACS to try to hold.

What seemed new then was for BACS to include in its membership, and as part of its mission, research and teaching not just of Chinese language and literature, but also about China in departments and courses on comparative literature, cultural studies, history, geography and the social sciences. I think I was the first social scientist to be President, followed immediately by Harriet, historian cum cultural studies and anthropological fieldworker. Jane, our President now, is one too of course, and all three of us know the value of being able to read classical Chinese, not just the contemporary script and spoken

Chinese, in order to study contemporary China, in which some people of interest to us read and use classical Chinese texts.

Some of the Cold War antagonism to “Communist” China remains in the suspicion and condemnation of everything attributable to the government of the PRC by some historians or social scientists disillusioned with revolution. Most other China experts condemn the use of authoritarian powers to censor and imprison dissident artists, lawyers and protestors while acknowledging, for instance, the reduction of absolute poverty and while also regretting how steep inequalities of income and wealth have become. We adopt a more nuanced approach and informed judgement. In any case, BACS contains all views while supporting none, and should continue the stance that I came to admire, that of professional academic independence from all states, including the PRC.

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Conferencing, Networking, Publishing

Tao Tao Liu

President of BACS 1990-1993

I ran the BACS conference in 1993 and 2012; the former as President, and the latter under the presidency of Michel Hockx. The difference between the two conferences is striking enough to indicate the changes that had taken place since the early start of the Association in 1976—when the first lot of academics from different universities were invited to go on a tour of China—to what the Association now is.

Both the conferences in 1993 and 2012 took place at Oxford in September, when we had the run of the place during the vacation for normal students. We used the same facilities on both occasions: most of the meetings took place at the Oriental Institute, where the room was kindly offered free of charge, whilst people who wanted to stay nights did so at Wadham College. There the resemblance ends; from using a single room in 1993, which took about thirty-five people, we used three rooms in 2012, since apart from the room that we had used in 1993, there were also two other rooms, each with a capacity of about twenty-five. Meetings took place simultaneously; there were also plenary sessions in a large lecture hall in Wadham. The attendance for 1993 was about forty people in all, whilst for 2012, we had several hundreds.

In 1993 we had a theme: “Unity and Diversity: Local Cultures and Identities in China”, which subsequently was published with the same title as a book by the Hong Kong Press. David Faure and I were the main instigators. David invited Helen Siu and Myron Cohen since China was developing as an academic subject across the board, not only in straightforward sinology, but in anthropology as

well. We had a keynote speaker in Helen Siu, who spoke about Hong Kong identity.

There were plenty of entertaining events, such as special visits to the Pitt Rivers Museum, with Helene La Rue, ethnomusicologist at the Museum, giving us a talk entitled “Spring Festival amongst the Miao in Guizhou”, illustrated by slides and music. Even the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford held an exhibition of contemporary Chinese paintings. The meeting room, Lecture Room 1, was pleasantly crowded. Most people knew each other; there were also a few visitors from abroad. Altogether, the conference had a comfortable atmosphere that all of us enjoyed.

2012 was quite different. Although we had put out a call for papers to be submitted, nothing happened immediately, and it was really only in the last few days before the deadline that we got a large number of offers. Then, for a small committee of organizers consisting of the President, myself and Joanne Finley from Newcastle University, it was a matter of going through the abstracts sent in to whittle them down to a feasible number, and place them into appropriate slots. Since it took place immediately before the conference in Europe which some attended as well, we did not feel that we should extend the days. Getting the papers down to an appropriate number was a task which took up much time and much emailing. We dispensed with the idea of a theme following previous conferences which had garnered a large number of papers with no clear theme, but represented the work that had been done by our members. In the end we spread over three rooms at the Oriental Institute devoted to different topics, from ancient to present-day China and many other subjects. The papers took place contemporaneously in order for all the papers which qualified to be squeezed in. Some rooms were very crowded indeed.

Overall, there was much more administration than in the earlier conference. Apart from the sterling work of officers on the committee, I had to “borrow” several research students who were around Oxford at the time to help with various tasks, such as getting the abstracts distributed and registering participants. The conference was filled to the brim with papers, but we were able to invite keynote speakers for whom we had to borrow a larger room in

Wadham: Jin Jiang (East China Normal University) and Henrietta Harrison (Oxford).

In the fifteen years or so between the conferences, many more people have become involved in the study of China, with its rise as an economic power in the world. China has become major news in the papers and television channels, and the teaching of Chinese, in particular in schools which had a very small number in the past, has become a major preoccupation.

Academic conferences have become much more commonplace, where people bring out potential papers ready for publication. In the beginning, when papers on China stood little chance of being admitted to other conferences, we had to establish venues where the subject would be taken seriously, which partly accounts for the growth of the BACS conferences. Many more journals are now in existence that deal with the subject of China. Publishing became more a feature of academic life than it had been, where many felt that the number of papers they had contributed to or published was a factor in finding jobs.

Apart from the growth in the study of China, BACS is now better known for its awareness of current government trends, taking part and speaking up in meetings of major funding bodies in this country, generally running things and helping to bolster the role of China in academic circles and keeping the study of China as a serious discipline. Our website gives more information in general, and we have our bulletin, which we have kept up since we started. We deal with the prioritising of applicants, for instance, for the Huayu Enhancement Scholarships, which enable British nationals to study in Taiwan, and which we administer on behalf of Taiwan—incidentally it caused BACS to be black-listed on the web in China for a time. Moreover, the publication of *JBACS* on the web has further enhanced its standing. We have always welcomed the inclusion of anyone working on Chinese studies, regardless of their affiliations, and I hope that we will carry on with this practice.

Yet in spite of the expansion, BACS still gives many people the chance to be in touch with academics from other universities which are now doing Chinese—

we had started off with only six universities—and it still remains the “trade association” of those who live in Britain.

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The Dangers of Taking Responsibility and Acting on One's Conscience in 21st Century China: A Review Essay of Xu Zhiyong's *To Build a Free China: A Citizen's Journey*

Gerda Wielander

University of Westminster

On Thursday 13 July 2017, China's foremost dissident and Nobel Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo, died of liver cancer, only weeks after his "release" from prison on "medical parole". His closing statement, "I Have No Enemies" (Liu, 2009), delivered in 2009 before his sentencing, was read in his absence at the Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony in 2010, and has become a seminal text. Liu's death has had a profound effect on all those with China's interest at heart; it is of particular poignancy for a generation who experienced 1989 and saw it as a possible turning point, only to have their hopes crushed under the tanks that rolled into the square on June 4th. It was 1989 that turned Liu from an academic into a political activist. His activism mostly manifested itself in writings, none more famous than "Charter 08", a moderately worded document calling for political reform, initially signed by over 300 individuals, which he helped draft and for which he "took responsibility". It was a responsibility that ultimately killed him (Link, 2017; Johnson, 2017).

Xu Zhiyong's closing statement to court, "For Freedom, Justice, and Love", was delivered on 22 January 2014, five years after Liu Xiaobo's. At the time of writing, Xu had spent four years behind bars for "disrupting public order". His memoir, *To Build a Free China: A Citizen's Journey*, translated by Joshua Rosenzweig and Yaxue Cao, describes in detail his journey from law student to one of China's most high profile political activists. Born in 1973 in a village in Henan, Xu studied at Lanzhou University and obtained a PhD from Peking University—"the last sacred ground of idealism" (Xu, 2017: 25)—in 2002.

Throughout his adult life, Xu was involved in grassroots political activism; paired with his legal training, this made him one of the most influential, and most important, figures of 21st century China so far.

Xu Zhiyong is part of a group of lawyers generally referred to as *weiquan* 维权 lawyers, which started to appear at the turn of the new century. Practicing law is one of the most difficult and frustrating professions in China; it has also become one of the most dangerous. Xu was detained in August 2013, and was sentenced to four years in prison in January 2014. His arrest was followed, in June 2015, by a systematic crackdown on *weiquan* lawyers, which has affected more than 300 individuals and includes criminal detention, house arrest, and residential surveillance.¹

Lawyers have replaced writers as the most politicised class of professionals in Chinese society today; the frustration and harassment they encounter in the daily experience of the Chinese state are important factors in this development. According to a study from 2010, Chinese lawyers value political rights far more than economic rights, and they are least happy with the extent to which their aspirations for democracy are realised; generally speaking, support for political reform increases when people have had negative, direct experiences with state actors (Michelson & Liu, 2010: 311, 323-8). Xu's memoirs provide the first comprehensive, first-hand account of the movement and activities of one of the main Chinese *weiquan* lawyers, and the myriad of negative experiences they have to contend with. They also provide an invaluable account of the workings and methods of the Chinese state in the 21st century, and should be compulsory reading on all courses on Chinese politics.

The book is organised chronologically by case, starting in 2003 and ending with Xu's closing statement to court, which forms chapter 27. The 27 chapters chart his activities and accompanying thoughts as he took on a variety of ground-breaking cases, including the Sun Zhigang case (a university graduate beaten to death for lacking a residence card) and the Sun Dawu case (a private entrepreneur, whose business was declared "illegal" and whose case should be compulsory reading for everybody wedded to the idea of China having adopted

¹ For a detailed, continuously updated chronology of the crackdown, see HRIC (2017).

“neoliberal” practices). Xu also worked on the cases of Chen Guangcheng and Cai Zhuohua. The former is a self-taught lawyer and human rights activist;² the latter is a house church pastor charged with “illegal business activity” for printing bibles and other religious publications (see Wielander, 2009a). Other chapters reveal the way in which Xu pushed for the right to an education to be upheld equally, particularly for children of migrant workers, so they could sit for their university entrance examinations where they reside. He also called for officials to publicly declare their assets, worked on a case involving *Southern Metropolitan Weekly*, and wrote a lengthy report on Tibet. In between, he also found time to campaign against new rules for dog ownership in Haidian, teach law at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (until his suspension from teaching in 2009), and carry out investigative work in a whole series of landmark cases.

Some of the cases Xu recounts in his diaries provide indispensable illustrations of things one understands on a conceptual level, but has difficulty imagining. Xu’s matter of fact accounts of the systematic violence meted out to petitioners in Beijing’s “Petitioner Village”, and by those guarding “black jails” (a “holding” place for long-term petitioners after the abolishment of custody and repatriation centres—a direct consequence of Xu’s earlier work), provide vivid descriptions of what Stein Ringen (2016) has dubbed China’s “controlocracy”, of which violence forms a staple and necessary ingredient. Xu’s dry accounts of all the efforts to thwart (successfully) his third attempt to run as a candidate for his local people’s congress (in Haidian), after having been elected twice (in 2003 and 2006), provide insights into China’s “democratic processes” and challenges those who see in China a “different form of democracy”, and who deny China’s authoritarian nature (Keane, 2017).

In all the cases he and his colleagues took on, they tried to achieve several things at once: to take on the defence of individuals, for sure, but also to inform the general public about injustices and their rights, and to improve relevant legislation. Informing the public required access to media, and Xu and his colleagues were avid users of BBSs and China’s internet from its inception. They

² See Lovell (2015) for a review of his memoirs.

made clever use of this new medium, which became an essential tool in his legal battles, as he describes:

Much of the time, when we defended constitutional rights, the judicial process we faced was often overshadowed by external political power. When we defended our clients, we needed to use the tools of public opinion to rescue the judges from that shadow. In some cases, it got to the point where legal technique was less important than salvaging the dignity of the judicial process through public opinion (Xu, 2017: 121).

By his own account, Xu and his colleagues always strove for a low-key compromise, rather than radical, headline-grabbing solutions. At all times, Xu stressed the responsibility of every citizen to take positive action, and to use the rule of law. When pressed about his motives by his local party secretary in 2005, the “only selfish motivation I could think of was that I did these things for my own well-being and happiness ... Yes, I am pursuing my own happiness. Helping others allows me a sense of well-being” (2017: 144).

Xu Zhiyong is Liu Xiaobo’s junior by eighteen years, and exactly the same age as Yu Jie, a well-known, acerbic critic of the Chinese government and former house church leader who has been in exile since 2012. *To Build a Free China* is a collection of Xu’s writings over the years, rather than a memoir written post-hoc. For this reason, very few names of other individuals, apart from some other lawyers, are mentioned in his accounts and writings; name dropping decreases further as time progresses to protect both himself and those working with him, as Xu’s activities (and those of his colleagues) came under closer surveillance. Neither Liu Xiaobo nor Yu Jie are mentioned once in Xu’s book (although Andrew Nathan mentions Liu in his introduction), but one can assume that their paths crossed, in the circles in which they both moved, in the first decade of the 2000s.

Some of these circles will have been Christian churches and groups. The fact that a disproportionate amount of *weiquan* lawyers are Christians is now a well-known fact. This author was the first to point to this connection (Wielander,

2009b), but the phenomenon has since received wider attention.³ The link between a belief in Christianity and political activism remains tentative and complex. Both Liu Xiaobo and Xu Zhiyong have shown an interest in Christianity. Liu read and made extensive notes on Christianity and political action (Wielander, 2013: 130-1); Xu, in his own words, “has dabbled in Christianity” (Xu, 2017: 148). Neither were practicing Christians. However, both are part of a wider movement employing spiritual language to express a political idealism.

Xu’s interest in Christianity was not limited to the philosophical and spiritual realm. Many *weiquan* lawyers, including him, have been active in religious rights defence. This interest emanated from a recognition of its importance in the context of the “house church movement”, and because religious rights defence tests several freedoms allegedly upheld in the Chinese constitution—the starting point for *weiquan* arguments. Many early *weiquan* lawyers were also part of the Association of Human Rights Attorneys for Chinese Christians, which consisted of individuals who were not only eminent figures within their academic fields, but also devoted Christians with their own house church groups. Among them were Gao Zhisheng, Wang Yi, Li Baiguang, Teng Biao, Guo Yan and Fan Yafeng; several of them were close collaborators of Xu’s (Wielander, 2013: 139-40).

Following Liu’s death, *The Economist* went with a cover that called Liu “China’s Conscience” (15 July 2017). In fact, “conscience”, *liangxin* 良心 or *liangzhi* 良知 in Chinese, has been a widely used term in political counter-discourse. It resonates with Chinese cultural sensibilities,⁴ but has gained significance in guiding one’s actions in the context of resistance against what is seen as “not right”. Another key term, used throughout Xu’s writings, is “love”. On 6 February 2010, Xu delivered a powerful speech at a meeting of petitioners entitled “Practice Love on the Road to Justice” (chapter 14), which is steeped in spiritual language and includes several references to God. He concludes with the following words:

³ See, for example, Liu and Halliwell (2016: 104-6).

⁴ See, for example, Oxfeld (2010).

Only love can bring about a better society. Only love can melt the hatred and hostility. ... Only love can truly change this country, long submerged in the hate of dictatorship. Let us use our love to melt this frozen land, to dissolve the despair and hatred deep inside each of our hearts, to establish a free and democratic China—a country where our children and grandchildren can enjoy freedom and dignity (Xu, 2017: 180).

Apart from an interest in Christianity, Xu Zhiyong also shares with Liu Xiaobo an uncompromising belief in the truth. Liu angered many for saying that he did not see anybody killed in the square in 1989 (Link, 2017). Xu, equally, angered many for standing fast in his conclusion that, after thorough investigation, 76 year old Yu Rufa, whose case he was asked to take on, was not beaten to death in a black (i.e. unregistered) jail. As Xu said, “I’ll always stand on the side of the weak, but truth is the precondition for justice. We must never act without principle or bottom line. We cannot substitute lies for the truth or the truth for lies” (2017: 229). Not all who oppose dictatorship go about this in an unscrupulous way, he said; some use “the methods of dictators to oppose dictatorship” (2017: 227)—not something Xu himself can abide.

Despite his continuous activism, his memoirs also reveal Xu as a traditional Chinese intellectual. Not only does he invoke Liang Qichao and Sun Yatsen in his writings, placing himself in a lineage of reformers, but the sheer profligacy of his writings also conforms to intellectual expectations. Readers benefit from incredibly detailed insights into Xu’s work, because he has kept meticulous diaries. Most of the entries in these memoirs were not written with the reader in mind; in his earlier chapters one sometimes wishes for more rigorous editing, only to be reminded that the sheer tedium and frustration—and at times brutality—Xu encountered as a result of efforts made by the party-state and its minders to prevent him from carrying out his work are a crucial aspect of this documentary of one man’s efforts to act as a “good citizen”.

Xu’s approach to making a difference was based on a very simple concept: to take one’s rights and duties as citizen seriously. From this simple and sincere premise, backed up with countless politically motivated, concrete and far-

reaching examples of “model” behaviour, Xu built the “New Citizen Movement”, a platform from which he advocated

a citizenship that begins with the individual and the personal, through small acts making concrete changes to public policy and the encompassing system; through remaining reasonable and constructive, pushing the country along the path to democratic rule of law; by uniting the Chinese people through their common civic identity; pursuing democratic rule of law and justice; forming a community of citizens committed to freedom and democracy; growing into a civil society strengthened by healthy nationalism (Xu, 2017: vii).

Chapter 19 of the book is Xu’s manifesto for China’s New Citizen Movement, which was published on 29 May 2012; it is a powerful political document, far from the low-key compromises that he and his colleagues sought to achieve in their earlier cases. The manifesto was published nine years after the Citizens’ Alliance (known in Chinese as “Gongmeng” 公盟) was formed in 2003. The story of the development of this organisation—by all accounts a civil society organisation in the classic sense judging by its purpose, intent and actions—is woven through various different chapters of the book, and provides a fascinating case study for the student of Chinese social organisations. It was registered as a company, although it was entirely non-profit and existed for the purpose of “conscience and justice” (Xu, 2017: 116). The alliance was inspired by the *weiquan* movement, which, by 2003, was in the process of becoming an important force for promoting social progress in China. The Citizens’ Alliance had three purposes: taking on defence cases, informing the public, and improving legislation. It also called on people to take an active part in local people’s congress elections, and quite simply became an organisation to which people from all walks of life turned to for help.

The organisation encountered difficulties from the start, with its website being shut down, Xu being accused of tax evasion (which led to a twenty day detention in 2009), and no doubt was the main reason for his ultimate detention and sentencing. From a loose alliance with a diverse portfolio, it turned into a

well-known political movement with a clear platform. As Xu writes, the New Citizen Movement was

a political movement through which the people of this ancient nation can bid farewell to autocracy once and for all and make the transition to constitutional government. It's also a social movement that will break with corrupt privilege, abuse of power for personal gain, and the huge gap between rich and poor, and instead build a new order of equality and justice. And it's a cultural movement to create a new national spirit that can replace the authoritarian culture of subjects. Finally, it's a movement for peaceful progress, one that will advance the level of the entire human civilization (2017: 211).

Bearing in mind that Xu was detained in August 2013 and was subsequently sentenced to four years in prison, one could expect his release in the coming weeks. Whenever he is released, we can assume that his health will have significantly deteriorated.⁵ Medicine could no longer offer a solution for Liu Xiaobo when he was “released”, but several before him had been forced to “choose” exile on medical grounds after their bodies, if not their minds, had been weakened to such an extent that leaving the country was their only option. These tend to be the moments when the West can show magnanimity and assume the moral high ground, by offering medical treatment and exile to thus affected individuals. But one has to be clear that the weakening of inmates through torture and other cruel practices is part and parcel of China's systematic suppression of “progressives ... [who] work together to see China through the transition to civilized politics” (Xu, 2017: 277), as well as countless nameless others who will never benefit from the opportunity to go into exile. This suppression and systematic violence is also part of the oft-lauded “China model”, which has gained much admiration and from which many companies and governments in the West benefit.

We can assume and hope that Xu will continue his fight for “freedom, justice, love, and for the sake of our long-held dreams” (2017: 273) for some time to

⁵ The records provided by Human Rights in China clearly document the deterioration in health that occurs following periods of imprisonment (see HRIC, 2017).

come. We can also ponder what our role as students and researchers of China is at this particular juncture, where a newly risen “great nation” and major geopolitical player is systematically cracking down on citizens’ movements and destroying their leaders. Xu Zhiyong’s—as well as Liu Xiaobo’s and the hundreds of detained lawyers’—crimes were, so far as we can tell, no more than to be self-declared patriotic citizens acting on the basis of their conscience to build a “better China” (Xu, 2017: 282), and to take responsibility for their words and the movements they started and inspired. As scholars and teachers, we can start by putting this invaluable source on our reading lists and by ensuring that we train the next generation of sinologists and translators, who have the interest and the ability to read and listen to what Chinese people are saying to each other, to detect the alternative discourses and actions among the clamour of voices trying to explain China, thereby helping them to be heard more widely.

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Gerda Wielander is Reader and Head of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Westminster.

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Howard Y.F. Choy (2016). *Discourses of Disease: Writing Illness, the Mind and the Body in Modern China*. Leiden: Brill. 272 pp., ISBN 978-90-04-319202.

So few are high quality explorations of the medical humanities and illness narratives in China (and East Asia more broadly) that I was very interested to see the publication of this new edited volume. In what appears to be a highly personal project (the book is dedicated to Choy's wife Shelley, who is disabled and contributes her own chapter), editor Howard Choy has brought together nine very different studies, which range across time, geographical location and, of course, illness and disease, to offer a fascinating examination of the way in which discourses of disease have developed in China from the late nineteenth century on. The contributors are a mix of well-established names and newer scholars from institutions in the US, Hong Kong and Australia, and from several disciplines—predominantly Chinese Studies-related, but also comparative literature and education—which allows for a range of approaches and perspectives. The subjects covered in their various chapters include mental illness, drug addiction, cancer, disability and AIDS, offering much to those interested in the medical humanities and China.

In the introduction, Choy sets out the volume's objective, which is to trace "the pathological path of the 'Sick Man of East Asia' (*Dong Ya bingfu* 东亚病夫) through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into the new millennium" (p.1), through a reconfiguration of an ambitiously broad number of fields listed as film, literature, history, psychology, anthropology, ethnography, gender and cultural studies. While I feel that more could have been done in this section to engage with broader theories of psychiatric and bodily illness and disability (individual chapters are much more engaged in this regard), Choy follows an established approach that emphasises the way in which disease and illness (used interchangeably) are "historically situated, socially defined, and culturally meaningful" (p.2). He sets the scene by exploring the way in which Chinese understandings of disease and diagnosis are essentially discursive, and

highlights the inevitable intersectional nature of disease—it is never merely medical, but intersects with notions of imperialism, nationalism, revolutionary romanticism, and marketisation, as well as aspects of individual identity and experience.

Stephanie Villalta Puig’s exploration of “James Henderson’s *Shanghai Hygiene and the British Constitution in Early Modern China*” opens the volume proper. Although very interesting, it is something of an anomaly in the book, being the only study to examine British, rather than Chinese, discourses of hygiene and health. It is only in the concluding remarks that Puig introduces the way in which other expatriates and locals in treaty ports elsewhere appear to have drawn heavily upon these emerging understandings of health and disease to develop what Ruth Rogaski (2004) terms “hygienic modernity”, ideas that would become increasingly central to Chinese conceptions of *weisheng* 卫生. This is a real shame, as the chapter potentially offers insight into British medical imperialism and, with better framing, could have spoken more directly to the new discourses of disease in China that emerged as a consequence, and which form a backdrop to subsequent chapters.

Wendy Larson’s chapter, “Curing Unhappiness in Revolutionary China: Optimism under Socialism and Capitalism”, moves on in time to explore the way in which “revolutionary optimism” (*geming leguanzhuyi* 革命乐观主义), became a key element of Maoist social practice. An attempt to “cure” what was medicalised as the “absence of happiness”, mandated happiness, argues Larson, should be seen to be part of a larger spread of cheerfulness around the globe from its origins in nineteenth-century Europe. Her chapter spends much time tracing these journeys, with an initial focus on the reception of Émile Coué’s “conscious suggestion” in the US, followed by the development of Maxim Gorky’s optimistic “New Socialist Man” in the USSR, before moving on to Mao’s revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism, which combined to produce “an exuberant lyricism that pushed out unhappy thoughts and expressions” (pp.78-79). While more time could perhaps have been spent on China as promised by the title, the concluding section offers food for thought about the political usefulness of promoting optimism under both capitalist and socialist conditions.

Birgit Bunzel Linder's chapter, "Metaphors unto Themselves: Mental Illness Poetics and Narratives in Contemporary Chinese Poetry", offers an intriguing journey into "illness poetics". Through the poetry of Guo Lusheng (literary name Shi Zhi 食指), diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1972, and Wen Jie 温洁, chronically depressed since childhood, Linder examines the way in which these distinctive poets reflect and explore their respective mental illnesses. Their poetry is shown to offer a rare window into the subjective and cultural nature of pain and illness, where the continued stigmatisation of mental illness in China provides ample opportunities for metaphors of personal alienation and a diseased society. One minor irritation was the use of untranslated German terms—*Grenzerfahrungen* and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—which sent me scurrying for my dictionary at various points; but this is a minor quibble about a chapter that sets up useful foundations for future explorations into the "nexus between medicine/psychiatry and literature" (p.91).

In "Unmaking of Nationalism: Drug Addiction and its Literary Imagination in Bi Shumin's Novel", Haomin Gong begins to unpick the way in which writing about illness and disease in China has been so often intertwined with national conditions and seeks to present a more diverse way of understanding drug addiction in China today. With *The Red Prescription* (*Hong chufang* 红处方, 1997) by Bi Shumin 毕淑敏 forming the central case study, Gong charts the changing narrative of drugs, from nationalistic "preaching" (a reaction to China's humiliation as "The Sick Man of East Asia") to the "ideological ambivalence and complexity" of post-socialist China (p.131), and demonstrates how the novel reflects these new understandings. Following Keith McMahon (2002), Gong also argues that the novel offers further evidence as to the way in which "gender constitutes an indispensable dimension in articulating drug addiction in particular and other diseases in general" (p.140).

Howard Choy's own contribution—"Narrative as Therapy: Stories of Breast Cancer by Bi Shumin and Xi Xi"—continues many of the threads from the previous chapter to understand how "fictional treatments" are overturning the political appropriation of narratives of disease and illness to become personal vehicles for therapeutic storytelling. For Bi Shumin's *Save the Breast* (*Zhengjiu rufang* 拯救乳房, 2003), it comes in the form of "narrative therapy"—the therapist-author reveals how her clients reclaim their sense of self and voice. In

Elegy for a Breast (*Aidao rufang* 哀悼乳房, 1992) by Xi Xi 西西, by contrast, the first-person narrative offers us a process of self-therapy and self-discovery—“narrative as therapy” if you will. In both, Choy reveals the way in which individuals counter the “problematic identity” of a patient who is subordinated to medical diagnosis and, in doing so, he elucidates the complex biopolitics of breast cancer “as both social stigma and physio-psychic trauma” (p.153).

In “Narrating Cancer, Disabilities and AIDS: Yan Lianke’s Trilogy of Disease”, and in contrast to previous chapters, Shelley Chan argues that under the pen of satirical fiction writer Yan Lianke 阎连科 “the nightmare of being a sick man” continues to haunt China (p.178). Through a study of *Streams of Light and Time* (*Riguang liunian* 日光流年, 1998), *Pleasure* (*Shouhuo* 受活, 2004) and *Dream of Ding Village* (*Dingzhuang meng* 丁庄梦, 2006), Chan shows how Yan’s depictions of cancer, disability and AIDS should be read as metaphors for the morbidity of contemporary Chinese society where “the malpractices of materialistic modernization is driving people to self-destruction” (p.194). While I agree with Chan’s argument, her understanding of disability is not at all embedded in China-specific research leaving it to straddle somewhat awkwardly between Western disability studies and Chinese fiction. Note also that the Chinese word for disability is no longer *canfei* (残废) – this term has long been supplanted by *canji* (残疾) and, more recently, *canzhang* (残障).

The last three chapters focus specifically on AIDS. Kun Qian’s “Reluctant Transcendence: AIDS and the Catastrophic Condition in Gu Changwei’s Film *Love for Life*” (*Zui ai* 最爱, 2011) explores how this filmic adaptation of Yan Lianke’s novel *Dream of Ding Village* is something of paradoxical attempt by the director “to make AIDS a metaphor for the collapse of the social immune system and at the same time to aestheticize it by proposing love as a way of transcendence” (p.204). Li Li’s chapter—“Alone Together: Contagion, Stigmatization and Utopia as Therapy in Zhao Liang’s AIDS Documentary *Together*”—continues directly on from Qian’s study to examine the companion documentary (*Zai yiqi* 在一起, 2010) and the way in which such experimental filmmaking is contributing to the developing discourse of AIDS in China. Firmly embedded in both Western understandings of AIDS discourse and the Chinese sociocultural context, Li ably demonstrates how, while the “fear and fantasy of AIDS contagion in China is always closely associated with the ‘risk group’ considered prone to spread the

disease as well as pollute public morality” (p.233), “immersive” AIDS writing and representation as exemplified by *Together* defies that dominant discourse through faithfulness to the experience of people with AIDS (PWAs).

The final chapter by Kavin Carrico—“The Unknown Virus: The Social Logic of Bioconspiracy Theories in Contemporary China”—investigates the intriguing new phenomenon of “HIV-negative AIDS” (*yinxing aizibing* 阴性艾滋病) or “the unknown virus” (*weizhi bingdu* 未知病毒), whereby sufferers believe they have are HIV-positive despite all medical evidence to the contrary. Like many of the other contributors, Carrico draws on the work of Susan Sontag (1989) to reveal in China the existence of “a new imagining in which social and personal anxieties are articulated through the idea of a simultaneously destructive and elusive illness” (p.257). Here, he argues, China’s “sexual revolution” and continued sexual repression have combined to create an extreme “sociosexual duality” and a disease woven, quite literally, of discourse (p.259). A fitting conclusion to this timely and interesting volume.

References

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Sarah Dauncey
University of Nottingham