Chapter Thirteen

Politics in China

Comparative Politics Today, 9/e
Almond, Powell, Dalton & Strøm

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Country Bio: China

- **Population:** 1,307.56 million
- **Territory:** 3,705,386 sq. miles
- **Year of PRC Inauguration:** 1949
- **Year of Current Constitution:** 1982
- **Head of Party and State:** Hu Jintao
- **Head of Government:** Wen Jiabao

- **Language:**
  - Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect)
  - Yue (Cantonese)
  - Wu (Shanghaiese)
  - Minbei (Fuzhou)
  - Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese)
  - Xiang
  - Gan
  - Hakka dialects
  - Minority languages

- **Religion:**
  - Daoism (Taoism), Buddhist, Muslim 2-3%
  - Christian 1% (estimated)
  - Note: officially atheist
Background

Mao Zedong

- 1949 Communist victory
- Formally inaugurated the People’s Republic of China
- Until his death in 1976, he was the chief architect and agitator for a project to lead an agrarian people to modernization, prosperity and communist utopia.

- After his death
  - Successors rejected most of the revolutionary project; declaring it a failure essentially.
  - Launched new era of reform
Background

- New economic pragmatism
  - Economic growth highest priority
  - Communist Party’s main assignment
  - Retreated from government’s direct administration of the economy
    - Superiority of capitalism
    - Socialist market economy
  - But have rejected political pluralism
    - Tolerates no challenge to the Communist Party’s monopoly on political power
- Institutionalization in China
  - Promote more transparency, stability, and responsiveness
  - To encourage investment and innovation
  - Safeguard against arbitrary dictatorships and disruptive politics
    - Better crafted laws, new legality, more assertive representative assemblies, and popularly elected grassroots leaders
Current Policy Challenges

- Political corruption, rural unrest, growing wealth gap, and severe pollution
- Fostering economic growth and deliver a better material life for Chinese citizens
  - Economy has grown at a rate of nearly 10 percent per year since 1980
- Economic success has not been costless
  - Corruption
  - Rural reform
    - Land not privately owned, but contracted for agricultural use by Chinese farmers
    - Farmers poorly compensated
  - Growing wealth gap
  - Public disturbances
- China has thoroughly abandoned the strictures of communist ideology; experienced an awesome economic revolution.
  - Opened up political processes to most diversified inputs
  - But have also firmly suppressed organized challenges to the Communist Party
Historical Setting

- Confucianism
  - Conservative philosophy
  - Conceived of a society and the polity in terms of an ordered hierarchy of harmonious relationships
- Imperial order to the Founding of the PRC
- Nationalist Party
- Chinese Communist Party
- Mao Zedong
- History of the PRC
  - Deng Xiaoping
  - Lean to One Side
  - Great Leap Forward
  - Retreat from the Leap
  - Cultural Revolution
Social Conditions

- Huge population
  - World’s most populous country
  - Most live in the countryside, but now that is only 57% compared to 85% in 1980
  - Rural industrialization and growth of towns
  - Rural collective industry is the most dynamic industrial sector

- The population is concentrated in the eastern third of the land
  - Only ¼ of China’s land is arable
  - Land shortage/reduction in cultivated area
  - Land is used for property borders, burial grounds, and bigger houses.
  - So the problem of feeding the large population is expected to continue

- China is a multiethnic state
  - 92 percent of Chinese are ethnically Han, but there are fifty-five recognized ethnic minorities, ranging in number from a few thousand to more than 16 million.
  - Tibet and Xinjiang (unrest)
Structure of the Party State

- **Design Features**
  - Guardianship
    - Describes the main relationship between the Communist Party and society
    - Representation of “historical best interests”
    - Mass line
  - Party Organization
    - Democratic centralism – Leninist principle
    - Refers mainly to consultation: opportunities for discussion, criticism, and proposals in party organizations
  - Two Hierarchies, with Party Leadership
    - Division of labor between party and government structures
Structure of the Party State: Government Structures

- National People’s Congress (NPC) – legislative
  - Elected for five-year terms by delegates in provincial-level congresses and the armed forces
  - Assemble once annually for a plenary session of about two weeks
  - Always large body
  - Formally has extensive powers: amendment of the constitution, passage and amendment of legislation, approval of economic plans, etc.
  - Is it a rubber-stamp assembly? Was during Maoist years, but now....
  - It is still too large and meets too infrequently, but the lawmaking role of the less cumbersome NPC Standing Committee seems to be gaining.
Central Structures

Legislature
- Premier WEN Jiabao
- Standing Committee 10 members
- State Council 30 members

Government
- National People’s Congress 2,591 members
  - Standing Committee 159 members

Judiciary
- Supreme People’s Court
- Supreme People’s Procuratorate

Party
- General Secretary Hu Jintao
- Standing Committee 9 members
- Politburo 24 members
- Central Committee 198 members
- National Party Congress 2,120 members

Local Governments and Legislatures
- Provincial governments
  - Provincial congresses
- Municipal governments
  - Municipal congresses
- County governments
  - County congresses

Public
- Township governments
  - Township congresses

Key
- Elects, appoints
- Nominates
- Party exercises nomenklatura authority

Chinese Political Structures

Figure 13.1
Structure of the Party State

- **State Council-executive functions**
  - Composed of the premier, who is head of government, and his cabinet of vice-premiers, state councillors, ministers, auditor general, and secretary general
  - Has its own Standing Committee, which meets twice weekly
  - As in most parliamentary systems, the bulk of legislation is drafted by specialized ministries and commissions under the direction of the cabinet
  - President—Head of State—purely ceremonial office

- **Communist Party Leadership**
  - Judiciary:
    - Supreme People’s Court
    - Supreme People’s Procuratorate
      - Bridge between public security agencies and the courts
Structure of the Party State

- Party Structures
  - National Party Congress
  - Central Committee
    - Exercises the powers of the congress between sessions
    - Chinese political elites
  - Politburo
    - Politburo Standing Committee
  - Top Leader and the Succession Problem
  - Party Bureaucracy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>More than 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>57,900(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Founding of the PRC, 1949**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party Members</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>11 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>22 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>28 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>35 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>40 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>46 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>51 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>58 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>66 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>71 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Communist party membership dropped from 57,900 to 10,000 after April 1927, when the Nationalists broke the "united front" with the communists in a massacre that decimated communist forces and ignited civil war.

Top Party and Government Executives, 1949–2007

**Government Premiers**

- Zhou Enlai: 1949
- Hua Guofeng: 1976
- Zhao Ziyang: 1980
- Li Peng: 1987
- Zhu Rongji: 1998
- Wen Jiabao: 2002

**Communist Party Leaders**

- Mao Zedong: 1949
- Hua Guofeng: 1976
- Hu Yaobang: 1978
- Zhao Ziyang: 1987
- Jiang Zemin: 1989
- Hu Jintao: 2002
Structure of the Party State

- People’s Liberation Army
  - Does not dictate policy to party leaders, but it is the self-appointed guardian of Chinese sovereignty and nationalism.
  - Preventing Taiwan’s independence
- Party Dominance
  - Nomenklatura system
    - The most important mechanism by which the Communist Party exerts control over officials.
  - Party membership
  - Party Core Groups
  - Overlapping Directorships
  - Elite Recruitment
- Rule by Law
  - Socialist Legality
  - Legal Reform
  - Criticism of Legal Practices
Political Socialization

- **Mass Media**
  - Ordinary citizens now exposed to news and opinions about public affairs
  - Hong Kong
    - Relatively free and critical mass media
  - Chinese journalists expose government wrongdoings and thwart official efforts to suppress news of disasters.
  - Chinese leaders reserve the right to shut down publications that in their view go too far.
  - Internet: 50,000 cyber police; still difficult to monitor

- **Education System**
  - Past: very ideological; persecution of scholars
  - Today: respect for expertise
    - Fall 2006 reduced the seven compulsory courses on political ideology and party history to four, in the first major curricular change in twenty-five years.
Political Culture

- From radicalism to “reform and opening” to the outside world
- Political Knowledge
  - Not uniformly distributed in China
  - More active knowledge and interest found in men, the more highly educated, and Chinese with higher incomes.
- Beijing
  - Here people discuss politics very frequently
- Political Values
  - Reject every democratic value and support for democratic values generally low
  - Influence of non-Chinese political socialization is evident
  - Show an impact of socioeconomic development; urban Chinese are much more supportive of democratic values than are mainland Chinese generally
Support for Democratic Values in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the PRC

FIGURE 13.3

Percent expressing disagreement with statements below.

Accountability: “Top government officials are like the heads of a big family. We should follow all their decisions on national issues.”

Liberty: “The government should have the power to decide which opinions (perspectives) are to be circulated in a society and which are not.”

Leadership orientation: “We can leave everything to morally upright leaders.”

Political Participation

- Changes in the Rules
  - Political participation: was required; now optional
  - Mao: mass mobilization campaign; contemporary leadership does not attempt to rouse the mass public to realize policy objectives
  - Rejection of mass mobilization as the dominant mode of political participation
    - Rather: express opinions and participate through regular, official channels – hotlines, letters to newspaper editors, etc.

- Local Congress Elections
- Village Committees
- Unacceptable Political Participation
- Protestors and Reformers
  - Democracy Movement
  - Tiananmen massacre of June 4, 1989
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Act</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voting for deputies in 1988 local congress elections</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting leaders of workplace</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining through bureaucratic hierarchy</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting for leaders in workplace</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining through trade unions</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using connections (<em>guanxi</em>)</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining through political organizations</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slowing down on the job</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters to government officials</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading others to attend campaign meetings for congress deputies</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining through congress deputies</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading others to attend campaign or briefing meetings at workplace</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing others to fight against leaders</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters to newspaper editors</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading others to vote for certain leaders in workplace elections</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whipping up public opinion against workplace leaders</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading others to vote for certain deputies in congress elections</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving gifts in exchange for help</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading others to boycott unfair workplace elections</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting to complaint bureaus</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading others to boycott unfair congress elections</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing cases to court</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in strikes</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in demonstrations</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interest Articulation and Aggregation

- Organizations Under Party Leadership
  - Satellite parties
  - Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference
  - Important mass organizations
    - All-China Federation of Trade Unions
    - Women’s Federation
  - Mass organizations represent the interests of the Communist Party to the organized “interest groups” it dominates, not vice versa.
    - Transmission belts
Interest Articulation and Aggregation

- **NGOs**
  - Nongovernmental organizations
  - Most active in environmental issues
  - Seek embeddedness
  - All-Chinese Women’s Federation: responsible for more than 3,000 social organizations dealing with women’s issues

- **GONGOs**
  - Government-organized nongovernmental organizations
  - Front operations for government agencies
  - Set up to take advantage of the interest of foreign governments and international NGOs to support the emergence of Chinese civil society.
  - Most interesting: business associations set up to organize firms
    - The Self-Employed Laborers Association
    - The Private Enterprises Association
    - Federation of Industry and commerce
Policymaking and Implementation

- Policymaking
  - Three tiers in policymaking
    1. Politburo and its Standing Committee
    2. Leading small groups (LSGs)
    3. Relevant party departments and government ministries
  - From agenda setting to implementing regulations
    - Five stages: agenda setting; inter-agency review; Politburo approval; NPC review, debate, and passage; and the drafting of implementing regulations
    - Two most important states: interagency review and drafting of implementing regulations

- Policy implementation
  - Monitoring
  - Policy priorities
  - Adapting policy to local conditions

- Corruption
Chinese Policy Process

Policies

1. Party Departments and Government Ministries
   Conduct policy research, organize policy experiments, draft policy documents, consult businesses on regulatory issues

2. Leading Small Groups
   Coordinate and lead policy work in departments and ministries

3. Politburo Standing Committee
   Decides major policies
   Recommend policies to Politburo Standing Committee

4. Party Politburo
   Approves Standing Committee decisions

Legislative Proposals and Implementing Regulations

5. State Council
   Drafts implementing regulations

6. National People’s Congress Chairman’s Group
   Refers proposed legislation to NPC committee to review and amend

7. National People’s Congress Specialized Legislative Committees
   Review, amend legislation
   Recommend legislation to NPC Chairman’s Group

8. National People’s Congress Standing Committee
   Debates, amends, passes legislation

9. National People’s Congress
   Debates, amends, passes legislation or ratifies legislation passed by Standing Committee

Laws

Emerging Issues

FIGURE 13.4
Policy Performance

- Economic Growth
  - Success story; opening up to foreign trade and investment
    - Trade balances
    - Scarcity prices versus government controlled or two-track pricing system
  - Decentralization
  - Reform of SOEs

- Environmental Degradation
  - Economic growth = serious environmental damage
  - Health and productivity costs
  - “first development, then environment”
  - EPBs local environmental protection bureaus
  - State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
    - Underfunded
### Table 13.3
Economic Performance, 1980–2005 (in constant yuan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GDP (billion yuan)</th>
<th>GDP per Capita (yuan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>898.9</td>
<td>853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,859.8</td>
<td>1,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5,749.5</td>
<td>4,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,825.4</td>
<td>7,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18,232.1</td>
<td>14,025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. $2,279 billion U.S. $1,753 ($6,800 PPP)

# Table 13.4: Foreign Trade, 1978–2005
(in U.S. billion constant dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trade Volume</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>20.64</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>29.33</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>13.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>38.14</td>
<td>20.02</td>
<td>18.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>44.03</td>
<td>22.02</td>
<td>22.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>41.61</td>
<td>19.29</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>43.62</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>53.55</td>
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<td>1985</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>1987</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>102.79</td>
<td>55.27</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>111.68</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>115.44</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>236.62</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>260.86</td>
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<td>289.88</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>325.16</td>
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<td>323.95</td>
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<td>360.63</td>
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<td>194.93</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>474.29</td>
<td>225.09</td>
<td>249.20</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>509.65</td>
<td>243.55</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>620.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>850.99</td>
<td>412.76</td>
<td>438.23</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>1,154.55</td>
<td>561.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,421.90</td>
<td>659.95</td>
<td>761.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Performance

- Population Control
  - Little regulation during Maoist years; 1978 population close to a billion
  - One-child family policy
    - State-sponsored family planning added to the constitution
    - Ideal family had one child
    - Most couples required to stop childbearing after one or two births
    - Married couples in urban areas restricted to one child
    - In rural areas, married couples are subject to rules that differ across provinces. In some, two children permitted. In others, only one child permitted; in most provinces, a second child is permitted only if the first is a girl.
    - Difficult to implement; many sons ideal: a married daughter joins the household of her husband, while a married son remains in the household to support aging parents.

- Policy implementation
  - Carrots and sticks utilized to encourage one child policy

- Perverse outcomes
  - Shortage of girls
  - Sex-selective abortions
Population Structure, 2005 Midyear, by Age and Sex


FIGURE 13.5
Hong Kong

- 1842 and 1860, the island of Hong Kong, and adjacent territory on the Chinese mainland, were ceded by treaty to the British in perpetuity.
  - Due to result of wars fought to impose trade on China
  - For nearly a century, China was a British colony.
- 1984, the Chinese communist authorities elaborated the principle of “one country, two systems” applicable to Hong Kong after 1997
  - Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 but would continue to enjoy a “high degree of autonomy.”
  - Chinese authorities hope the outcome will woo Taiwan back to the PRC, too.
Taiwan

- Governed by the Nationalists as the Republic of China since 1945
  - 100 miles off the east coast of the Chinese mainland.
  - Communist “liberation” of Taiwan
  - Korean war; American interests in the security of Taiwan
- Two major events affected Taiwan’s status
  - Lost its membership in the U.N. and its seat on the Security Council to China in 1971
  - U.S. recognized China diplomatically, downgrading the relationship with Taiwan to one of unofficial liaison
- Today fewer than 30 countries recognize Taiwan.
- Taiwan’s public does not support unification.
China’s Political Future

- Still primarily a communist state
  - Room for optimism?
- The dramatic changes in the Chinese economy, polity, and society, are as much a by-product of reform as a direct product of reform policies.
  - Room for optimism?
- Authoritarianism has not survived intact with economic modernization in many East Asian countries.
- Prediction: The party will continue to transform China in the years to come and to transform itself in order to continue to rule.