

The political system of china politics essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Opaque and shrouded in secrecy, China's political system and decision-making processes are mysteries to many Westerners. At one level, China is a one-party state that has been ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since 1949. But rather than being rigidly hierarchical and authoritarian, which is often the assumption, political power in China now is diffuse, complex, and at times highly competitive. Despite its grip on power, the Party and its senior leaders (the Politburo and its Standing Committee) are not always able to dictate policy decisions as they once did. Instead, present-day China's political process is infused with other political factors that influence and sometimes determine policy.

Three other main actors co-exist with the Party at the top of China's political system. Chief among these is the muscular state government bureaucracy, whose structures closely parallel the Party's throughout China, operating in a largely separate but interlocking way to implement and administer state business. Another key institution is the People's Liberation Army, operating again largely separately and with a tenuous distinction between civilian, military, and Party leadership. Completing the top political institutions is the National People's Congress, constitutionally the highest organ of state power but in practice the weakest of the top political institutions.

Other political actors in China include provincial and local officials; a growing body of official and quasi-official policy research groups and think tanks that feed proposals into the policy process; a collection of state sector, multinational, and even private business interests exerting pressure on policy decisions; a vigorous academic and university community; a diverse media that informs public opinion; and an increasingly vocal and better-

informed citizenry that are demanding more transparency and accountability from government. New forms of communication and information availability also have pressured the PRC government to make changes in its political system, and have provided the Party with new means of maintaining political control. The political story in China today is the extent to which these multiple actors and changing circumstances have helped blur the communist regime's lines of authority.

Chinese politics is further complicated by other factors. In the absence of a more formalized institutional infrastructure, personal affiliations can play a significant role in political decisions, adding unpredictability to an already murky process. In addition, discipline between the different levels of party and government structure can be tenuous, leading to ineffective implementation of policy and, in some cases, serious problems with corruption.

Despite its internal problems, the PRC's Communist Party-led political system has proven exceedingly resilient to past and current challenges, but nevertheless is under stress and undergoing reluctant transition. Ironically, the Party's commitment to remaining in power appears to be forcing it to adapt continually to changing circumstances and to make incremental compromises with other participants in the political process when it is pragmatic to do so. A better understanding of how China's political system functions, as well as its strengths and weaknesses, may help U. S. lawmakers make more effective policy decisions that directly benefit U. S. interests.

Economic

Since the initiation of economic reforms and trade liberalization 30 years ago, China has been one of the world's fastest-growing economies and has emerged as a major economic and trade power. China's rapid economic growth has sharply improved Chinese living standards and helped raise hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty. Trade and foreign investment flows have been major factors in China's booming economy. In 2008 China, was the world's second largest merchandise exporter and third largest importer. Over half of China's trade is conducted by foreign-invested firms in China. In 2008, foreign direct investment (FDI) in China totaled \$92 billion, making it the destination for FDI among developing economies. The combination of large trade surpluses, FDI flows, and large-scale purchases of foreign currency (especially dollars) has helped make China the world's largest holder of foreign exchange reserves at \$2. 3 trillion.

The global economic crisis began to impact China's economy in late 2008. After growing by 13% in 2007, China's real GDP slowed to 9. 0% in 2008 and to 7. 1% in the first half of 2009 (year-on year basis). China's trade and inflows of FDI diminished sharply, and millions of workers reportedly lost their jobs. The Chinese government has sought to boost the economy by implementing a \$586 billion economic stimulus package (largely aimed at infrastructure projects), establishing easy money policies to boost banking lending, and providing assistance to various industries. Such policies have helped stabilize China's economy; real GDP is expected to grow by over 8% in 2009-far higher than the expected growth of any other major economy.

Despite the relatively positive outlook for its economy, China faces a number of difficult challenges that, if not addressed, could undermine its future economic growth and stability. These include pervasive government corruption, an inefficient banking system, over-dependence on exports and fixed investment for growth, the lack of rule of law, severe pollution, and widening income disparities. The Chinese government has indicated that it intends to create a “harmonious society” over the coming years that would promote more balanced economic growth and address a number of economic and social ills.

China’s economy and economic policies are of major concern to many U. S. policymakers. On the one hand, U. S. consumers, exporters, and investors have generally benefitted from China’s rapid economic and trade growth. China’s large holdings of U. S. securities have helped keep U. S. interest rates relatively low. Some contend that China has a large stake in ensuring the continuance of a liberalized global trading system. On the other hand, the surge in U. S. imports of Chinese products has put competitive pressures on various U. S. industries. Many U. S. policymakers have argued that China maintains a number of economic policies that violate its commitments in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and/or are harmful to U. S. economic interests, such as its currency policy. Concerns have also been raised over China’s rising demand for energy and raw materials in terms of the impact that demand may have on world prices, Chinese efforts to purchase energy and raw materials assets around the world, and the growing level of pollution and greenhouse gases that has resulted from China’s growing energy needs. China has been pursuing free trade agreements around the world, especially

in Asia. This has raised concerns that China might try to promote a greater Asian trading area that would exclude the United States, and thus possibly diminish U. S. economic power and influence in the region.

Environmental

China's recent rapid economic growth has come at a cost of environmental degradation. Various factors, including the conflict between economic development and environmental concerns, insufficient government regulation of China's environment, and lack of public awareness regarding environmental issues have hindered China's effort to find a proper balance between economic prosperity and its environmental health. This study identifies the major problems in China's ecological environment. It then examines China's efforts to promote environmental protection. Lastly, it studies the clash between China's environmental concerns and government policies that encourage economic development, and the international ramifications of that conflict. In so doing, this study uses China as a model for how developing countries might achieve a proper balance between demands for economic development and environmental protection.

Chinese Environmental Problems

China's current environmental problems can be divided into seven categories: land, industry, energy, water, the controversial " Three Gorges Dam" project, air, and population

Legal

It is important to note that, by design, China does not technically have an independent judiciary or a legal system that operates outside the influence

of the ruling Chinese Communist Party. This is an important distinction between China and Western democracies in which the court system is a critical component of the checks and balances placed on the other branches of government. In fact, China's lack of an independent judicial system exacerbates all the other fault lines running through the totalitarian state; there simply is no effective recourse available to individuals whose interests are harmed by the excesses of CCP officials, laws, and institutions. Think of the scope and scale of what is addressed in the United States everyday through civil and criminal litigation - redress from unfair laws and business practices, compensation for injury, fraud, and lax environmental regulation, assignment of liability, justice for victims of public and private malfeasance, marital and custody disputes, protection of private physical and intellectual property. Some would argue ours is an overly litigious society. However, the average individual seeking a forum in which to officially air grievances and pursue some form of justice in China has a difficult time.

Most importantly, China's legal system lacks neutrality. The CCP approves all court appointments, and judges are technically responsible to the Party, not to the people. From the Basic, Intermediate, Higher Level People's Court, and Supreme People's Court, the CCP hand is evident. The CCP's Political and Legal Committee has the power to intervene in deliberations, and even to overturn verdicts issued. In addition, the infrastructure lacks capacity; for example, there is one lawyer per 10, 000 people in China (the United States ratio is one lawyer per 550 people). And finally, in many Western democracies, the ultimate arbiter of a law's constitutionality is the

court system. In China, this function becomes muddled and the CCP apparatus often rules on the interpretation of its own laws.

Social

In the past few years, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has experienced rising social unrest, including protests, demonstrations, picketing, and group petitioning. According to PRC official sources, "public order disturbances" have grown by nearly 50% in the past two years, from 58,000 incidents in 2003 to 87,000 in 2005. Although political observers have described social unrest among farmers and workers since the early 1990s, recent protest activities have been broader in scope, larger in average size, greater in frequency, and more brash than those of a decade ago. Fears of greater unrest have triggered debates with the Communist Party leadership about the pace of economic reforms and the proper way to respond to protesters.

Workers in state-owned enterprises and the special economic zones producing goods for export, peasants and urban residents who have lost their farmland or homes to development projects, and others have engaged in mass protests, some of them violent, often after having exhausted legal channels for resolving grievances. A December 2005 clash between villagers and police in Dongzhou village, southeastern Guangdong province, in which 3-20 villagers were killed, has become a symbol of the depth of anger of those with grievances and the inability of Chinese administrative, legal, and political institutions to resolve disputes peacefully. U. S. interests regarding social unrest in China include human rights concerns, ongoing U. S.-funded democracy and rule-of-law programs in the country, the effects of social unrest on U. S. investments in China, and the effects on PRC foreign policy.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-political-system-of-china-politics-essay/>

Growing disparities of income, official corruption, and the lack of democratic institutions are likely to continue to fuel social unrest. The potential for widespread social upheaval has captured the keen attention of the Communist Party leadership.

However, in the medium term, the PRC government is likely to be able to contain protests through policies that mix accommodation and violence and that promote continued economic growth. Most analysts do not expect social unrest to evolve into a national political movement unless linkages among disaffected groups strengthen and other social groups, particularly the middle class, intellectuals, and students, join the protests as well.

Policy options for Congress include increasing assistance for local democracy, civil society, rule-of-law, and environmental programs in China, supporting a free press and independent judiciary, and pressing the Chinese government to respect the rights of protestors and release jailed activists.

December 15, 2005, a bi-partisan group of U. S. congressional leaders submitted a letter to the PRC Ambassador to the United States, Zhou Wen zhong, expressing “ deep concern” over the shooting incident in Dong zhou.

Technological

After the Sino-Soviet split, China started to develop its own nuclear weapons and delivery systems, successfully detonating its first surface nuclear test in 1964 at Lop Nur. A natural outgrowth of this was a satellite launching program, which culminated in 1970 with the launching of Dong Fang Hong I, the first Chinese satellite. This made the PRC the fifth nation to independently launch a satellite.

In 1992, the Shenzhou manned spaceflight program was authorized. After four unmanned tests, Shenzhou 5 was launched on 15 October 2003, using a Long March 2F launch vehicle and carrying Chinese astronaut Yang Liwei, making the PRC the third country to put a human being into space through its own endeavors. China completed its second manned mission with a crew of two, Shenzhou 6 in October 2005. In 2008, China successfully completed the Shenzhou 7 mission, making it the third country to have the capability to conduct a spacewalk. In 2007, the PRC successfully sent the Chang'e spacecraft, named after the ancient Chinese moon goddess, to orbit and explore the moon as part of their Chinese Lunar Exploration Program. China has plans to build a space station in the near future and to achieve a lunar landing in the next decade. There are also plans for a manned mission to planet Mars.

China has the world's second largest research and development budget, and is expected to invest over \$136 billion in 2006 after growing more than 20% in 2005.[133] The Chinese government continues to place heavy emphasis on research and development by creating greater public awareness of innovation, and reforming financial and tax systems to promote growth in cutting-edge industries.

In 2006, President Hu Jintao called for China to make the transition from a manufacturing-based economy to an innovation-based one and the National People's Congress has approved large increases in research funding. Stem cell research and gene therapy, which some in the Western world see as controversial, face minimal regulation in China. China has an estimated 926,000 researchers, second only to the 1.3 million in the United States.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-political-system-of-china-politics-essay/>

China is also actively developing its software, semiconductor and energy industries, including renewable energies such as hydro, wind and solar power. In an effort to reduce pollution from coal-burning power plants, China has been pioneering the deployment of pebble bed nuclear reactors, which run cooler and safer, and have potential applications for the hydrogen economy.

China currently has the most cell phone users in the world with over 800 million users in July 2010. It also has the largest number of internet and broadband users in the world.[]

<http://matadornetwork.com/change/10-environmental-atrocities-in-china-that-you-didnt-know-about>