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Modern China is an astounding fixture in the global climate. From nebulous, weak, and bloody beginnings, The State has risen as a force to be reckoned with in international business and politics. The amount of transformation that has occurred over the last 20 years within the economic scope of China is nearly immeasurable. To some, this transformation signifies a changing global makeup – with China paving the way towards a dominant position. This position certainly holds merit: considering data on the economy, population growth and environmental impact, China's acceleration has consistently been the source of headlines and international business interest. To others, this transformation signifies not a positive revolution, but a falsity – a bluff of epic proportions fueled by artificial growth and State mandated repression. In either version, there is absolutely no way of denying the incredible restructuring of everyday life that has taken place under the Communist Party.

Political change in China has been slower than economic change, but immeasurably improved from the height of Maoist fervor. China still, in its rapid change, lacks a cohesive philosophy on human rights, as well as economy. It is free to be molded as its leaders see most fit. Simply put, China governs by goals, not by a binding set of moral doctrine. In this flexibility, China's true capabilities are revealed. China's policy towards political expression is optimized to quicken the nation's rise towards its goal of being an economic and world power. However, as China's needs continue to change along that path, so too will its philosophy towards political and intellectual expression – if it furthers the cause.

Before discussing the ability of China to reach is economic and social goals, those actual goals must be delineated. In short, as the prompt notes, they are about transformation. Let us first explore China's goals within the economic spectrum. China seeks to burst out of the stymieing label "3rd world", and evolve into a "modern market economy" (Qian et al, 2). Beyond simple economic growth, of which there has been abundance, this market philosophy is being incorporated into the party itself. In 2001, for the first time, members of private firms are being allowed entry to the party (Steinfeld, March 3rd). These are all pieces of China's grand plan: world influence, and a seat at the table as a global economic power. In "The Next Empire" by Howard French, this notion is explored. Speaking historically, he notes that Beijing has sought to "hold its own with Washington and Moscow," referring to China's cold war strategy. Now, this type of economic influence is back, and on an "unprecedented scale." This demonstrates China's newly invigorated initiative: the spreading and strengthening of influence around the globe.

This stance, although justified by decades of ideologically congruent action, is not the only perspective on the matter. The Chinese government is obviously still run by the "Communist Party" – the antithesis of capitalism, at least in theory. The Government still maintains the persona of the "People's" Republic of China. However, from the early 1990's, Deng Xiaoping made clear that socialism and market economies were not entirely at odds when he asserted that "markets are not capitalism". China's goals, at least from their perspective, do not have to be pro-capitalism to be pro-market. Indeed, it is irrelevant what the meaning behind the intention here is. China, regardless of motivation, is focused obsessively and utterly on its place in the economic world. The

most crucial next step for China is, however, at home. Specifically, China is attempting to drive homeland consumerism, to sustain their enormous output potential of goods. Such a notion explains why China has put such enormous emphasis on the migration of villagers to the cities. With that change of scenery comes the title of "consumer" over "producer." Thus, the citizens of China and their relationship to the economy drive much of the nation's policy towards its population. Let us now explore this relationship between the government and the populace.

On the social front, the government has sought less evolution than in the economic spectrum. Indeed, they wish for full obedience – the uninterrupted participation in the economy. However, these citizens have increasingly been requesting change. Although "China is undeniably the epicenter of global labor unrest", the government has repeatedly been trying to keep it silent: "there is no such thing as a legal strike in China" (Friedman). This dire situation exemplifies a point: labor and stability are what China wants out of the proletariat. This takes the form of oppression, but it boils down to a simpler issue. With unrest, there is an inefficient system, a rejection of power, and the potential for destabilization. These are not conducive to China's establishment as superpower in global economics and politics. China's strategy of governance towards the citizenry is one of domination – quelling hostilities when needed, but ultimately relying on the steadfast workforce to keep production and economic growth in full swing. There are pieces of evidence that suggest a contrary point – one in which the government is more wise, more considerate, and more respectful of the average citizen. This stance, and its weakness, shall now be explored.

In recent years, China has shown increasing fairness in the eyes of the law – even correcting injustices done to the proletariat after legal battles. One of the most famous cases is that of Ma Wenlin, a teacher from Shaanxi province. After unjust tax hikes rain down on locals, Ma helped make change by taking the case to court, getting it heard and building momentum on rights issues for the poor. Incredibly enough, this taxation – most certainly benefiting the government, was taken to the prefectural court. After deliberation, the courts ruled in favor of the farmers. Although this is an incredible occurrence, it is not justification for saying that China's government wants any semblance of justice for its citizens. Instead, China grants citizens justice only when it sees fit – as strategic plan, strengthening the government and its reputation. Indeed, it was almost an advertisement – an invitation to praise the Chinese government and its justice. After the case, the major newspaper of the central government published the situation, broadcasting this "victory" for the poor. However, in 1997, Ma Wenlin returned back to his village and was bombarded with pleas from villagers asking again about unjust taxation practices. The case held little weight, and was thrown out of course. The same villagers, the same crime – but no justice. Instead, Ma Wenlin was silenced through court hearings, eventually sentenced, and sent to 5 years of hard labor (Steinfeld, March 10). This "rule by law" principle, as opposed to "rule of law" perfectly exemplifies China's overarching strategy in political setting. Rather than being an instance of justice, it reinforces the idea that China is a moral chameleon, adapting to its environment with intent on survival, in hopes that its lizard-like tendencies go unnoticed.

In its current state, China has a strong hold on political expression. It is also one of the largest economies in the world. Although it is not an entirely stable system, its

instability is not large enough to rock the immeasurable, multiplicative momentum of economic prosperity and a powerful state. Looking at how China manages this balancing act, let us examine the sturdiness of the system – and whether or not it is conducive to China's goals on economic and social frontiers.

Although injustices are committed on the Chinese people, the relative isolation of geography, as well as the muting force of information censorship, help keep individual moments of rebellion in China from gaining momentum. When issues do develop, they are quickly repressed, and have little lasting impact on the general system as a whole. The Honda transmission plant protests of 2010 prove a prudent example of this point. During this controversial series of events, workers demanded higher pay and did not receive it, fueling a string of protests and the shutting down of production for the plant. Obviously, this caused drama on behalf of the Party as well as Honda, with talks getting nowhere. Rather than let the situation build, a party official helped fix the situation by making Honda raise wages. All would be well with this, exact the fact that we have "no evidence it (raising wages) happened" (Steinfeld, March 10). This first effort was meant to eliminate the threat, and it only partially succeeded. A string of more protests followed, culminating in bloodshed and eventual subsidence (Friedman). This most certainly does not seem like the government having total control - and they don't. However, the tension is particularly interesting because, regardless of how strong the animosity has been, it has always subsided, with no real reform. "This…dispersed, ephemeral, and desubjectivized insurgency has failed to crystallize any durable forms of counter-hegemonic organization capable of coercing the state or capital at the class level" (Friedman). As these protests happen, much of their momentum is brought down by the

lack of cohesion and communication between cities hundreds and thousands of miles away. For all of the protest that occurs, so much more is drowned out by that distance.

Another more recent example of this that deals with censorship is the issue of the environmental documentary, "Under the Dome." A multinational news story, this documentary, and the resulting fervor, attracted the attention of all demographics in China. Unlike the worker protests, which are significantly more meaningful to the lower classes, this documentary hit home for the elite, living in China's biggest cities. With meaningful discussion online, as well as lax governmental censorship, this documentary, which exposed the environmental issues of smog as health concern in China, seemed destined to be something big. As Steinfeld mentioned in class in March, this was a very rare event indeed. Not only was a story that openly acknowledged problems of China's biggest cities allowed to be published, but also China's own Minister of Environmental Protection praised it. However, at the peak of the dialogue, China's government censored the video, taking it down and out of the browsers of Chinese citizens. Steinfeld explained in class the next Tuesday, March 10th, that this was simply not surprising, and thus did not fuel any outrage. People's attitude towards China's censorship is similar to that of a victim of a flood towards water. In that ambivalence, China's stability and political strategy find surprising stability. However, more interesting than in the previous example is the ambivalence of the educated and relatively wealthy middle class. As the middle class is expected to grow in China to a point of dominance, it is important to understand the sentiments held by this increasingly powerful class. Let us now explore the relationship between the middle class and the government of China as it relates to political realities and tension.

Not all are under the thumb of the oppression – indeed, for a subsection of the population, China's governance has brought reasonable wealth and education. This burgeoning middle class has and will only gain more power to make change to the system. However, part of China's strength comes from the favorable feeling it produces from this section of the population. Members of the middle class "generally support the authoritarian rule of the state because they are dependent on state power for their own survival and prosperity during development" (Jie Chen, 336). This middle class can be considered a stable portion of the economy – with their good fortune, there is less reason to be discontent. Furthermore, much of their success relies upon the government – to protest the government would be a surefire way to risk any preexisting semblance of economic freedom. Given the above, the middle class of China seems to pose little threat to the government's legitimacy. Thus, let us move on to other possible destabilizing factors that could digress China from its economic goals – the makeup of the economy itself.

There is a prominent argument against the robustness of the Chinese economy, made clear by James McGregor on behalf of the United States Chamber of Commerce. This argument is that indigenous innovation does not exist in China and, in turn, the future of the Chinese economy cannot be held in a necessarily confident regard. This innovation is lacking, according to the analysis, because of suboptimal standards for political participation. Although indigenous innovation is necessary for success in China and abroad, and it must be examined, it is not the soul determinant of success. Examining the state of China's markets, there are many variables that contribute immensely to China's economic success, such as a strong export and foreign investment market which

have helped raise China from utter weakness, and have spurred huge growth in national consumerism and way of life for many Chinese citizens.

Foreign direct investment has been a crucial component of the industrialization of China. This investment is vital to the Chinese economy because it signifies an investment "for the long haul" (Steinfeld, April 9). This type of investment takes shape in investments such as the purchasing of factories. These factories motivate worker migration around China, raising income and spurring global export competition. Good or bad, this has been a major component of the Chinese economy since its opening to the west. Beyond increasing export market dominance, as a spur of worker migration, it has forever changed the makeup of China. The ways in which it has changed that makeup are directly affiliated with China's goals of social and economic change.

As previously alluded to, one of China's main goals is increased national consumerism – sparked by the migration of citizens from the countryside to cities. With this new lifestyle, a consumerist lifestyle is highly encouraged, and would significantly encourage the self-sustainment of China, rather than sole dependency on those foreign sources of demand. Obviously, large amounts of investment have been made to fuel this change - infrastructural accommodations to fit these migrants have boomed over the last several years. Noted in Steinfeld's lecture from March 5th, concrete use from 2011 to 2013 exceeded America's consumption within the entire 20th century. Much of this concrete was designated for the purpose of new construction, to fit the needs of a newly urban society. This investment has been made possible due to foreigners, who have large stakes in the migration of individuals to the cities, as that is where production factories lie. With this massive influx of capital and construction, there is no doubt that much of

China's goals on the economy and populace are being fulfilled. The transformation into an urban society is well underway.

Besides these factors of the economy, there is certainly a hole where indigenous innovation should lie – at least in truly original innovation. However, China has seen enormous amounts of growth in tech field innovation, and is only accelerating. Although some purport that China lacks true innovation, the argument of "real" innovation from what China obviously has undergone is an irrelevant line drawn in the sand that devalues China's true potential in the innovation world.

An obvious question to ask is why there seems to be a lack of innovation in China. To some in the technology fields, China's current strategy on innovation is akin to "a blueprint for technology theft on a scale the world has never seen before" (McGregor, 4). However, this is not so easily identifiable as the truth. As McGregor continues, the true fault lies in assuming innovation has to look the same as it does in America. "It is time to admit China will never be 'just like us'" (McGregor, 38). China's innovations primarily circulate the theme of co-innovation or re-innovation, or the improvement of other innovations to best fit the individual needs of the Chinese people, many times for a fraction of the price. This strategy, although sound from a technological point of view, does raise tension in the international community. Not only are Chinese scientists mistrusted abroad, but they are also deemed threats by other Chinese scientists who think they will outcompete (McGregor, 35). This issue is a propagation of a larger problem, spawned by China's means of governance. Specifically, many of China's most talented scientists move to countries in which they will have more opportunity for innovation. As Steinfeld explained on April 9th, "china is lacking a space for these entrepreneurs to go

free." With easy-to-abuse intellectual property laws, innovators in China are not rewarded, but cheated, out of their innovations. Thus, much of the creative and intellectual talent in China moves to waters that are easier to navigate. This fault is the primary hurdle on China's jump to innovative power. If China emphasizes stronger rules on intellectual property by 'indigenous' scientists, it could lead to large amounts of innovation. Excluding this fault of the system, China is in a prime position to innovate. China's political system does not prevent participation for civilians in some of the most important aspects of innovation – education, industry, and the raising of money.

Education and industry are strongly linked in China. In the McKinsey Quarterly from February, 2012, authors Orr and Roth cite the recent creation of "22 Silicon Valley-like innovation hubs" in China (Orr, Roth). In recent years, the "The Ministry of Education (MOE) worked to guarantee projects and money for university labs and recruit Chinese scientists to come home" (McGregor, 11). Foreign requests from companies like Apple for cheaper and more efficient products fuels a massive industry in China (Steinfeld, April 9). There is no shortage of innovative enterprise in China. Whether it be a brand new idea is irrelevant – brand new ideas in regards to efficiency and cost are being developed in China every year. Not only is China innovating on behalf of foreign investors, it is incorporating these concepts into new products for Chinese citizens which have raised quality of life considerably. Mobile phones such as Xiaomi, high-speed railways, and beyond have fueled the workforce in China and have helped develop the country. China is an attractive place to invest as a Chinese individual or a foreigner. When the prospect of cheap labor and a cultural love for technology is put on the table, money finds its way. Chinese economic growth has been explosive. In short, these traits

can be attributed to China's stable, low-wage worker population. They can be attributed to China's mass migration of workers to areas around factories. They can be attributed to China's political strategy on participation.

Beyond the faults and positive aspects of innovation in China, there is another portion of the argument that needs mentioning: although China's current political strategy might be less conducive to innovation than other countries like America, the cause is not lost, even within the scope of China's current block on political and economic expression. Simply put, China is just as innovative and malleable in forming their own government and their own beliefs on expression as they are on producing new gadgetry. China has been innovating socially and politically since even before the Maoist era. The same mechanisms at play that created that change also brought about societal and political change to China over the last half century. This acceptance of the new proves vital to the future of innovation in China, and is worth noting as a positive feature of the Chinese cultural climate.

China has, in the last 60 years, gone from a communist dictatorship, to a disorganized conglomerate of socialism, to a budding capitalist/socialist crossbreed, to a fully fledged world power, led by individuals at the crossroads of power and capitalism. For many years, the optimal way of transforming into a communist state was through totalitarian nationalism, as exemplified by Maoism. More recently, the optimized path towards industrialization and a first world economy was through political stability and the mass migration of citizenry into cities. Although it is far from a democracy, it is not China's oppression that will be the determinant of China's fate. Instead, China's governance will take the most optimized path towards competition with the United States

and other powers – whether this occur through more mobilized political freedom or private sector entrepreneurship is irrelevant. China is in the game of global competition, and the future need not look identical to the current political climate in order to hold China's true intention: global competitiveness. Thus, the future of innovation within China has bright potential. Not only can China accomplish much with its current system, but also as an aspect of the system itself, it is subject to improvement. However, China's goals extend beyond simply the national, innovative ones. One of the most important parts of China's plan is how it interacts with the rest of the world.

There, strain tightens proportionally to China's growth. Through China's sanction of its citizens' political participation, it casts itself as a foreign entity to the rest of the free world, in a way reaching beyond a simple continental divide. Although China has enormous potential both nationally and abroad, it must consider its relations with the rest of the world if it is to be truly integrated. Issues like political repression, information censorship, and governmental elitism may work as tools within China, but they do limit the attractiveness and legitimacy of the nation on an international level. Furthermore, by hijacking international patents for their own innovations, they limit the incentive to unleash outside innovations on Chinese consumers, for the sake of not wanting to be plagiarized. In one pertinent example from the Obama administration, it is known that "unless China market access and IP protection significantly improves, the Obama administration will be unable to achieve its goal of doubling exports of goods and services in five years" (McGregor, 38). So far, however, this worry has not stopped the incredible influx of money and ideas from other countries into China. It is an imperfect

system but in this way, China is not preventing its goals on social and economic issues from being accomplished.

In most cases, China's control over political expression have aided in achieving their social and economic goals. Continuing into the future, there is much reason to be optimistic over its potential, given the same system. However, there are limitations that the current dynamic places on the system. Mostly, these relate to the potential to innovate and to interact as an economic power on the international plane. However, China is a malleable machine. The present system is simply a propagation of a greater scheme – one that has the potential to mold with the times and ideals of the Party leadership. China will morph as the leadership sees fit, encouraging innovation as it relates to China's potential for betterment.

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