# Project 2: Historical Context and Introduction

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## Research Plan

**Research Question**: There is an obvious dichotomy in opinion when referring to sentiment behind Mao’s rule that extends to modern day. Where do the opinons come from? Why does such a dichotomy exist?

## Introduction

When formulating an opinion on the rule of Mao Zedong, it can be hard to get a solid consensus on whether he was a great leader or an unforgiving villain. Today, we understand that media is controlled in China via means of the “Great Firewall” and control of other forms of media, but in Mao’s age controlling public sentiment was not as straightforward. Mao controlled his own, and the image of China, via the means of an unrelenting and violent rule that struck fear in the people in which he ruled.

*Historical Context*:

In 1949, when the new republic was founded, China was a poor and weak agricultural country (Dong 2014). Developing countries had a very small chance of becoming developed at this time and China, in addition, faced issues with population, infrastructure, and external blockades and embargos. The “Great Leap Forward” is the movement associated with Mao during his rule and is often credited with being the reason for China’s modern and industrious society.

*Impact of Historical Context*:

From 1958 to 1962, after the Leap, famine and violence devastated the nation. The outcome of the resulting class struggle was a terrified lower class, cannibalism, and a mesh network of obligations between the people. While China became a more productive nation as a result of total state control, its people suffered greatly, and dissenters were silenced. (Zhou 2012)

## References

Zhou, X. (2012). *The Great Famine in China, 1958-1962 : A Documentary History*. Yale University Press.

Zhikai Dong. (2014). Mao Zedong and the Independent and Comprehensive Industrial System and the Modernization of New China. *World Review of Political Economy*, *5*(4), 472–487. https://doi-org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/10.13169/worlrevipoliecon.5.4.0472