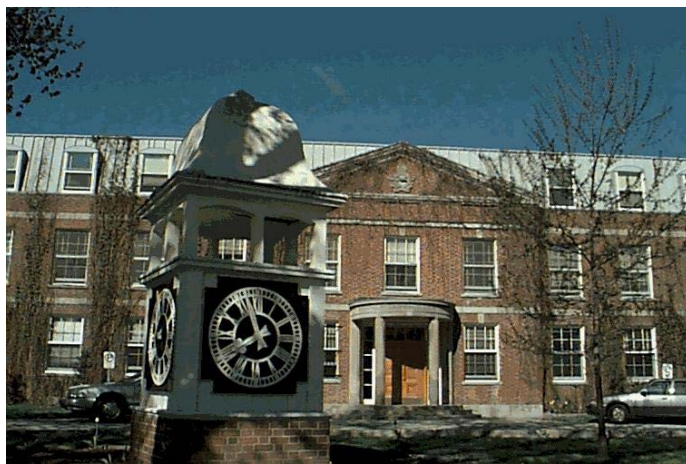


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CHINA - A FALL TO DEMOCRACY

Major P.S.C. Heebner

JCSP 40

Exercise Solo Flight

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CHINA - A FALL TO DEMOCRACY

By Major P.S.C. Heebner
Par le major P.S.C. Heebner

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Will China rise to achieve its socialist goals or will China succumb to capitalism and democracy on its path towards utopian communism? This question has been asked and answered a number of times since China began its march towards modernity in the 1980s through its embrace of the *market economy*, and yet China continues to surprise us by changing not only the rules of the game, but often by changing the game itself.

At first glance, China would still appear to be a communist state as we know it. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China (CPC), the People's Republic of China (PRC) was liberated from a Nationalist controlled China. For over 20 years, Mao applied the steady internal pressure of Marxist communism, a campaign that was quite familiar to the rest of the world in its ideology, and its endeavors. While Mao did not endure, his philosophy remained and China continued its steady isolationist march under communist ideology. Then in 1978, China decided to adjust the communist playbook to better suit its ambitions. Deng Xiaoping, a reformist leader of the People's Republic of China, introduced *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*, a philosophy whereby socialism was the stated objective and the market economy was the delivery mechanism.¹ Since 1980, China's appearance on the world stage has been steadily rising, but rather than being shunned by the democratic international community as was the case with all other communist states like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Cuba or Vietnam, China's progress has been accepted and even supported. Why would the democratic west allow and support the rapid economic rise of a communist China? The primary reason was the belief that a rising China would

¹ Liu Kang. *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 49.

provide economic opportunities throughout the world, specifically America.² The secondary reason was a Western belief that China's decision to embrace the global economic market would inevitably result in the demise of communism and the birth of democracy through capitalist practices. As the distinguished British journalist Will Hutton notes, it is in the Western interest to replace communism in China with constitutional government, . . . and a multiparty political system because only these enlightenment institutions can save China from the myriad of dysfunctions and internal contradictions it currently faces.³ It was believed, at the beginning of China's economic reform, to be in the best interests of Western society to support China as it inadvertently embraces capitalism on its journey towards socialism.

China today is quite different from the China of 1974 under the dictatorial leadership of Mao Zedong. China has rapidly transitioned from a largely agrarian society to a proletariat society. Rapid industrialization and the establishing of the world's largest manufacturing base have allowed this transformation to occur within decades rather than centuries. With this industrial growth has come intellectual growth, education, training, global awareness and global interaction. Yet this global advancement did not come without cost. Politically, socially, economically and environmentally the Chinese have paid dearly for state progress. These societal factors can no longer be ignored in an increasingly conscious society.

² Donald Gross, *The China Fallacy: How the U.S. Can Benefit from China's Rise and Avoid Another Cold War*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 113.

³ *Ibid*, 125.

China is a palace built rapidly upon unprepared ground. The larger the palace becomes the more apparent the structural flaws. Through addressing the foundational political, social, and environmental issues, which have been compromised for economic prosperity, China will inevitably continue to fall into democracy.

In less than 40 years from its embrace of the market economy, China has transformed from a backwater agrarian society to the world's largest market economy, according to all but China, who still contest they are lagging well behind the United States (U.S.). China's stance on this ranking is not a result of humility, but rather an attempt to avoid the inherent responsibilities that accompany such a position of global economic authority. In the *WTO Doha Round* negotiations, the Chinese stressed the fact that it's [China's] GDP per capita is very low, so it is entitled to benefit from flexibilities given to developing countries.⁴ While on the other side, advanced economies have argued that as Chinese products are so competitive globally, China should do much more than other poor and weak economies and should not use its developing country status as a cover to avoid taking obligations that are more international.⁵ China, only 13 years after its acceptance into the WTO, as an under developing country status, has surpassed every country in commodity exports, becoming the world leader in all nearly every conceivable commodity from basic clothing to high tech software and hardware.⁶

⁴ World Trade Organization, "China should be more active in global economic governance, Lamy tells Beijing forum," last modified 24 March 2013, http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/sppl_e/sppl274_e.htm.

⁵ *Ibid.*

It would seem China, in its impressive economic reform, has achieved another objective on its road to socialism, yet can this be considered socialist progress or are the Chinese adopting capitalism inadvertently? After all, how is a prospering China, embracing a market economy, and dominating the global economy any different than Western capitalist ambitions? This has become the narrow path China has set upon in its rapid pursuit of socialism, exploiting the advantages of capitalism, while attempting to control the resultant explosive growth through state dictatorship by the CPC. The Chinese targets for development; 2000 – 2010 double the GDP, 2020 double the GDP again, and 2050 China to be a prosperous, democratic, and civilized socialist country.⁷ Against the odds, China has repeatedly demonstrated its determination to achieve its goals, consistently amazing the world with its impressive economic success.

However, the balance of this economic growth is concerning. The Gini Coefficient is a number between 0 and 100, where zero corresponds with perfect equality and 100 corresponds with perfect inequality whereby one person has all the income and everyone else has zero income. Internationally nations are ranked annually by their Gini coefficients to compare income distribution over time, thus it is possible to see if inequality is increasing or decreasing independent of absolute incomes.⁸ Income inequality is corrosive in a socialist state and intolerable in a communist state, yet China's Gini coefficient has risen dramatically since its acceptance into the WTO

⁶ Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Factbook – China," last accessed 09 May 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2078rank.html>.

⁷ Zheng Bijian, "China's "Peaceful Rise" to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no.5 (September/October 2005): 18.

⁸ The World Bank, "GINI Index," last accessed 09 May 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>.

peaking in 2012 at 47.4, which has remained steady throughout 2013. To put this into context, China's inequality is dramatically higher than Cote D'Ivoire (41.5 in 2008), a "failing state" (ranked 12th in 2013⁹) which had had a permanent United Nations (UN) presence since 2003.¹⁰ While this inequality was tolerable during the rapid rise of the market economy and everyone prospered relative to his or her situation, as the economy begins to slow and prosperity stabilizes, it has become apparent that not everyone benefited equally. According to the World Bank, China's GDP has been constantly dropping over the past five years from 10.4 percent in 2010 to 7.4 percent in 2013.¹¹ This decline in GDP has placed China in a difficult situation; the economy requires more and more debt to produce the same amount of output which maintains the Chinese labour market. In order for China to keep its current growth model running, therefore, debt levels must continue to rise to ever more dangerous levels.¹² This rising debt negatively affects the Chinese population who withstand the worst of the effort to rebalance. Alexis de Tocqueville, French political thinker and historian and author of *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, explores the idea that major revolutions, like the French Revolution, do not occur during times of poverty, but rather when disparities between classes have become great enough to divide society. In other words, when a small handful of people

⁹ Fund For Peace, "The Failed States Index 2013," last accessed on 09 May 2014, <http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2013-sortable>.

¹⁰ The Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook – China," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2172.html>.

¹¹ The World Bank, "Data – China – GDP," last accessed on 09 May 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/china>.

¹² Michael Schuman, "The Real Reason to Worry About China," *Time Magazine*, April 28, 2013, n.d.

are extremely rich, and the vast majority of people are not¹³, exactly the case in China where the economic divide is extremely concerning. The CPC will need to address this economic inequality issue or risk a revolution. Repression and authoritarianism will no longer be as effective, in an increasingly diversified population as found today in China. Consequently, increasingly democratic concessions will increase in order to rebalance an extremely polarized population.

One of the most obvious indicators of civil unrest has been the increasing rise in protest movements across China as it continues to accelerate financially. According to research by the Chinese Academy of Governance, the number of protests in China doubled between 2006 and 2010, rising to 180,000 reported “mass incidents”.¹⁴ The protests are responses to a number of issues affecting a wider swath of the Chinese population than ever before. Protests in and of themselves are unremarkable and can actually be an indication of political health, as seen in Western democratic society. Far from destabilizing democracy, protest has been instrumental in forcing the introduction of most of the freedoms that now exist in liberal democracies.¹⁵ The distinction between healthy and dangerous depends on the political action taken in response to the movement. This is where the one party system starts to unravel, as any action taken by the CPC will only add fuel to the fire. According to Gregory (2011), repression will result in increased discontent and public demonstration or disobedience; concession will slow or possibly

¹³Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1856), 5.

¹⁴ Alan Taylor, “Rising Protests in China,” *The Atlantic*, 17 February 2012.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2012/02/rising-protests-in-china/100247/>.

¹⁵ Brian Martin, “Protest in a liberal democracy,” *Philosophy and Social Action*, Vol. 20, Nos. 1-2, (January-June 1994): 17.

reverse China's pursuit of socialism as it is forced to focus internally prematurely.¹⁶

Undoubtedly China will develop a unique solution to maintain its socialist ideology while adopting a more democratic approach to confront the growing civil unrest within the Chinese populace.

Corruption within the CPC has become one of the main grievances within the Chinese population. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), a method of ranking countries by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys, China in 2013 ranked 80th out of 174 countries listed. The CPI generally defines corruption as "the misuse of public power for private benefit".¹⁷ To put that in context, China was slightly less corrupt than Swaziland, a tiny donor dependent nation in Southern Africa (49th on the Failed States Index in 2013¹⁸) with a population around one million and a GDP (GDP) around four billion US dollars. Canada and the U.S. were ranked 9th and 19th respectively on the same index.

The Chinese population is no longer an ignorant agrarian society unaware of the state and uninterested in its ambitions. China has awakened and is well aware of the gap between the haves and the have nots. The CPC has to find a way to appease the population while continuing China's rise towards its stated socialist ambitions. In January 2013, shortly after his appointment to office, President Xi Jinping announced his

¹⁶ Paul Roderick Gregory, "China's Flawed Case for One Party Rule," *Forbes*, July 24, 2011, n.d. <http://www.forbes.com/2011/07/22/china-one-party-rule.html>.

¹⁷ Transparency International, "Corruption Perception Index 2013," last accessed 09 May 2014, <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/>.

¹⁸ Fund for Peace, "The Failed State Index," last accessed 09 May 2014, <http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2013-sortable>.

“campaign against corruption” vowing to crack down on powerful leaders and lowly bureaucrats alike in an effort to legitimize the CPC.¹⁹ While publically spectacular with over 182,000 officials punished in 2013 for corruption crimes, the true purpose of the crackdown remains questionable, as it does not address the root cause of the corruption.

While crackdowns such as those undertaken by China will satiate the general public temporarily, such measures fail to address the cause, focusing instead on the symptom. Inevitably, corruption will continue to appear in this unipolar political system and undoubtedly the Chinese population will grow increasingly dissatisfied with their political representation and its self-interest in expanding the chasm between the prosperous and the destitute. President Xi Jinping’s campaign against corruption will succeed because he controls the criteria defining success, which can be adjusted to suit the CPC, but will he still be able to convince an increasingly educated and aware population of his success. Without a political system of checks and balances, as is currently the case in China,²⁰ the powerful will continue to prosper at the expense of the weak, which is counterproductive to any form of government including *socialism with Chinese characteristics*.

With a population that is continuously evolving as China continues to embrace and dominate the market economy, the CPC must also evolve to represent the increasingly diverse Chinese population. This is especially poignant in a state as

¹⁹ Shai Oster, “President Xi’s Anti-Corruption Campaign Biggest Since Mao,” *Bloomberg*, May 4, 2014, n.d. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-03-03/china-s-xi-broadens-graft-crackdown-to-boost-influence.html>.

²⁰ China Through a Lens, “China’s Current Legislation Structure,” last accessed 09 May 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/kuaixun/76212.htm>.

incredibly diverse as China, which consists of 1.3 Billion people constituting 56 ethnic groups, speaking eight distinct Chinese dialects, and spanning over 3.7 million square miles.²¹ Representing such vast demographic interests is unrealistic without multiple party representation. The CPC has over 60 Million members within China and is the largest political party on the planet.²² To put that in context, the CPC membership is nearly twice the population of Canada. Consequently, creating a rival political party in China is impressively more complicated than in other democratic nations. This reality does not however dissuade the Chinese population in their pursuit of a prosperous and harmonious society, which they can participate in, rather than watch from afar. As a measure of concession, the CPC, since the turn of the century, has implemented democratic electoral processes at the grassroots level of Chinese society commencing with the village CPC sub-branch and recently expanding to include township CPC organizations. The essence of the various electoral processes is that the determination of village and township leadership is no longer regarded as an internal matter within the CPC. Instead, elected members must gain the support of not only the CPC members, but also the majority of citizens who are not CPC members.²³ While this concession has temporarily appeased rural Chinese at little initial cost to the CPC, it has also provided a taste of democracy, which has lingered and created a hunger for more. The CPC in its attempt to quench the rising unrest of a divided population has provided and authorized

²¹ Index Mundi, "China Demographics Profile 2013," last accessed 09 May 2014, http://www.indexmundi.com/china/demographics_profile.html.

²² China Through a Lens, "China's Political System," last accessed 09 May 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/Political/26151.htm>.

²³ Joseph Y.S. Cheng, *China: A New Stage of Development for an Emerging Superpower* (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, 2012), 47.

democracy with Chinese characteristics as a solution. The CPC once again has changed the game, allowing China to continue its climb towards socialism through economic reform while the general population distracts itself with *controlled democracy*. Yet who is being deceived in this latest twist, the people who have created and expanded another crack in the dictatorial governments foundation or the CPC who continue to believe they will be able to manipulate a maturing population towards communism through democratic practices.

While the CPC is willing to allow *controlled democracy*, it remains adamantly opposed to formed independent opposition. The key distinction being formed and independent, one voice carried by many. In 1992, “atheist” China experienced the rise of a new spiritual practice, *Falun Gong*, a spiritual discipline first introduced in China in 1992. It combines the practice of meditation and slow-moving qigong exercises with a moral philosophy. Although the practice initially enjoyed considerable support from Chinese officialdom, by the mid to late-1990s, the CPC and public security organs increasingly viewed *Falun Gong* as a potential threat due to its size, independence from the state, and spiritual teachings which all oppose the socialist Chinese regime. In October of 1999, the CPC declared *Falun Gong* as a heretical organization that threatened social stability. Hundreds of thousands of practitioners were arrested and dealt with extrajudicially. They were subjected to forced labor, psychiatric abuse, torture, and other coercive methods of thought reform at the hands of Chinese authorities.

Falun Gong is an incredibly passive practice, which counsels against participation in political or social issues. Excessive interest in politics is viewed as an attachment to

worldly power and influence, and *Falun Gong* aims for transcendence of such pursuits.²⁴ So why would the CPC focus such efforts on eradicating a practice that was foundationally opposed to political or social circumstance? It is likely because the CPC could not fully control *Falun Gong*, and its practice was spreading with estimates as high as 70 million followers prior to the crackdown on 21 July 1999.²⁵ Akin to a Shakespearean tragedy, *Falun Gong* in its efforts to demonstrate its disinterest in political trappings, via peaceful means, validated the CPC's perception of threat, as its authority was publically questioned. This threat was entirely manufactured by the oppressive actions of an insecure unipolar political party, which acted out of fear rather than acceptance. *Falun Gong* has retreated underground in China with followers estimated in the millions, portraying China's growing independence from, and disbelief in a dictatorial government. The CPC, largely due to the success achieved over the past 30 years, can no longer force an educated and aware Chinese society into submission as it once could. Increasing concessions will need to be made in order to maintain civil order, concessions that will result in democratic practices being adopted by the Chinese government at the behest of the Chinese people.

The CPC has led China from a backwards agrarian nationalist state to become the world's largest economic exporter in less than 65 years. Along the route, the CPC has amended its language from Marxist communism, Mao socialism and most recently to

²⁴ Wikipedia, "Falun Gong," last accessed 09 May 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falun_Gong.

²⁵ Seth Faison, "In Beijing: A Roar of Silent Protesters," *New York Times*, 27 April 1999. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/27/world/in-beijing-a-roar-of-silent-protesters.html>.

socialism with Chinese characteristics in order to validate the decisions made by the CPC, particularly during its recent economic reform. While China has grown into its market economy shoes, the CPC has remained largely unchanged, governing with an iron fist. Corruption within the CPC has resulted in an increased divide between the prosperous and the destitute. Inequality has become a field within which *controlled democracy* has been planted by the CPC at the grassroots level as a remedy. Crackdowns by a unipolar government only address the symptoms of the disease and bring awareness to their ineffectiveness as the symptoms return or mutate. The CPC has a decision to make, continue China's economic climb at the expense of the Chinese population or focus inwards and repair the political and social disparity within the state at the expense of continued growth. Politically the CPC has already begun to acquiesce to the Chinese population in order to maintain order. This trend will likely continue into the future whereby China slowly and inadvertently falls into democracy as it tries to stay on its unique socialist path.

China has risen, but its rise has come at the expense of the people. Social welfare services, such as: State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) previously provided childcare, education, job placement, housing, subsistence, health care, and the care of the elderly under the Chinese socialist welfare system. China's rapid economic reforms, coupled with the steady dismantling of the Chinese socialist welfare system, have resulted in declining social services provided by the Chinese state.²⁶ This compromise was intentional and is considered by the CPC to be a critical step towards *socialism with*

²⁶ Jonathan Schwartz, Shawn Shieh, *State and Society Responses to Social Welfare Needs in China: Serving the People*, (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2009), 4.

Chinese characteristics as outlined in Article 14 of the Chinese Constitution; whereby “The State establishes a sound social security system compatible with the level of economic development.”²⁷ The CPC believes that as China rises, its dependence on the state for social welfare should decrease. As a result, state funding towards social welfare SOEs has been reduced, creating unpredictable entrepreneurialism to cover the gap, or social welfare SOEs have been completely disbanded. Either way, a void has been created which has been filled by independent or state supported social organizations, which operate uniquely, and often at unachievable cost to the majority of Chinese citizens. As an example, Chinese government funded health has dramatically decreased since the beginning of the social welfare reform in the 1980’s.²⁸ This has resulted in the partial or complete privatization of most Chinese health care facilities, which has created a private market for the provision of health services. This is an obvious disadvantage for the majority of Chinese who continue to struggle to fulfill basic needs. A less obvious, but more nefarious outcome of uncontrolled privatization is entrepreneurialism. Since 2008, the UN Committee against Torture has confronted China with accusations of live organ harvesting of *Falun Gong* practitioners. According to the Kilgour-Matas report which was provided to the Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (CIPFG), a non-governmental organization, it is estimated that between 450,000 to 1 million *Falun Gong* members were detained at any given time, and estimated that tens of

²⁷ The National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China, “Constitution of the People’s Republic of China,” last accessed 09 May 2014, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm.

²⁸ Xian Huang, “The Politics of Social Welfare Reform in Urban China: Social Welfare Preferences and Reform,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 18, no. 61-85 (Fall 2012): 66. http://polisci.columbia.edu/files/polisci/u241/JCPS_XianHuang%202013.pdf.

thousands may have been targeted for organ harvesting.²⁹ China does not have a state sponsored organ donor program, nor does Chinese society subscribe to the donation of organs in death.³⁰ Prior to the mass incarceration of the *Falun Gong* there were less than 30,000 organ transplants conducted in China up to 1999 from state records. From 1999 to 2005, there were 90,000 organ transplants, 60,000 in only 6 years. All other variables assessed within the UN supported Kilgour-Matas report remained relatively constant during that time. Wait times for purchased organ transplants in China are measured in days and at most, single digit weeks. Whereas in the rest of the world, months and more often years of waiting are the norm. Purchased organ supply is not an issue in China, and as demand increases, supply seems to be keeping pace.

While Incredibly shocking, what does this have to do with health care? This is the entrepreneurial gap exploited to bridge the financial void created when the state reduced or removed funding completely from social welfare services such as health care. Prices ranging from \$180,000 for a liver to \$30,000 for a cornea could readily be found in Chinese hospitals at the time of the Kilgour-Matas report.³¹ *Falun Gong* practitioners are Chinese citizens of all ethnicities who are being publicly harvested alive by their own people for profit with the support of their government. If this is the case, then this is a mass genocide, which has been conducted daily for over a decade as a convenient and profitable method of dealing with organized competition to the CPC while bolstering a failing health care system. This is hardly a progressive move towards a prosperous and

²⁹ Davis Matas and D. Kilgour, "Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China," *Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong*, 06 July 2006, 3.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 15

³¹ *Ibid*, 35.

harmonious society. International and internal pressure as this issue has been brought to light, has forced the CPC to address this atrocity, placing measures and controls to ensure this does not occur in the future. This positive response to pressure is an indication of the CPC's slide towards a more democratic style of governance whereby it has become concerned with public opinion.

While the social welfare reform will continue to see a growing divide between SOE and privatization, its effects have not been as evident due primarily to a young and abundant workforce.

*"China, not long ago, had one of the best population profiles of any nation. The one-child policy, coming after Mao's extraordinary push to promote births, created China's "demographic dividend," an extraordinary bulge in the workforce."*³²

Unfortunately, for China, the *age wave* has begun to hit. Soon, one worker will have to support two parents and four grandparents, a phenomenon known as the *inverted pyramid*.³³ Combining the growing age wave with a steady decrease in state funded social welfare services will present a significant challenge for the CPC in convincing the public to endure the never-ending and constantly changing path to socialism. While the CPC has started to lift its one-child policy under certain circumstances, the action will have no impact on rebalancing the population demographics for at least two decades, much too late to be considered a solution to social welfare. Further, it is unlikely that the removal of the one-child policy will result in a population boom within China even

³² Gordon G. Chang, "China's One Child Change Doesn't Avert Demographic Collapse," *Forbes*, November 17, 2013, n.d. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/gordonchang/2013/11/17/chinas-one-child-change-doesnt-avert-demographic-collapse/>.

³³ *Ibid.*

within the next two decades. The cost of education can be significant in China, as can medical expenses, which are largely not covered by the state. Children are expensive, and with elderly parents to take care of, less Chinese are willing to leverage their futures for bigger families.³⁴ Socially, China is currently and will continue to face growing challenges as the demographics continue to change and the development of the state continues to rise. The CPC cannot ignore these rising social challenges. As the government addresses each diverse issue, it will certainly provide solutions that are no longer of the *one hat fits all* socialist variety, but account for the diversity of the people, thus embracing democracy in the resolution of complex issues.

Environmentally, China has not received many accolades internationally or even domestically. The cost of economic reform while pursuing socialism with Chinese characteristics can be visually observed across the Chinese landscape. China's environmental challenges are vast and continuing to grow as China continues to race towards its future. The CPC must choose between increasing the environmental living standards of the majority of Chinese citizens or remaining as the world's largest exporter and arguably largest global economy. Unfortunately, for the CPC, the scale of environmental devastation has become so rampant that partial attention will no longer suffice.³⁵ Air pollution in China is no longer localized to the industrial cities, which produce the majority of the pollutants as China pushes forward. A daily view of China's Air Quality Index as reported by aqicn.org consistently shows AQI statistics in the

³⁴ Eve Cary, "China's People Problem," *The Diplomat*, 05 February 2013. <http://thediplomat.com/2013/02/chinas-people-problem/>.

³⁵ Yang Dongping, *The China Environment Yearbook, Volume 5: State of Change: Environmental Governance and Citizens' Rights* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill N.V., 2011), xviii.

unhealthy to *very unhealthy* range for Particulate Matter (PM) measuring 10 micrometers in diameter or less often reaching ratings as high as 500 or more.³⁶ To place that in context, Canada on the same [aiqcn.org](http://aqicn.org) webpage received *good* to the occasional *moderate* utilizing the same scale.³⁷ Within the U.S. the Environmental Protection Agency says an index of above 300 (*very unhealthy*) is “extremely rare” in the U.S., and typically occurs during events such as forest fires.³⁸ A World Health Organization (WHO) report estimates that diseases triggered by indoor and outdoor air pollution kill 656,000 Chinese citizens each year out of approximately 2,000,000 globally.³⁹ This equates to roughly a third of the fatalities globally being attributed to Chinese air pollution, yet China constitutes one fifth of the global population. The World Bank believes that possibly as much as 13 percent of all urban deaths in China may be premature due to ambient air pollution.⁴⁰ Chinese citizens have measures of response to cope with air pollution that would be unheard of in Western society. The constant wearing of facial filtration masks, indoor and outdoor restrictions based on daily indexes score, and the regulation of vehicle traffic. The negative impacts of air pollution on the population are with the economy whereby millions of workdays are lost annually, the social welfare and health care systems where support is requested due to failing health

³⁶ Air Quality Index, “Beijing Air Pollution : Real Time Air Quality Index (AQI),” last modified 10 May 2014, <http://aqicn.org/city/beijing>.

³⁷ Air Quality Index, “Air Pollution in Canada: Real-time Air Quality Index Visual Map,” last modified 10 May 2014, <http://aqicn.org/map/canada/>.

³⁸ Debra Bruno, “A Buying Guide to Air Pollution Masks,” *China Real Time*, 28 February 2014. <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2014/02/28/a-buying-guide-to-air-pollution-masks/>.

³⁹ Kevin Holden Platt, “Chinese Air Pollution Deadliest in World, Report Says,” *National Geographic News*, 09 July 2007. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/07/070709-china-pollution.html>.

⁴⁰ The World Bank, *Cost of Pollution in China*, (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2007), 22.

and in the long term with population growth.⁴¹ As China continues to urbanize its population, air pollution will remain a danger to the Chinese population and a visual reminder of the cost of progress to the CPC.

Water in China is not much better. In the Huai river basin, one of seven major river basins in China, it is currently recommended that humans avoid direct contact with water along 75% of river sections. On average 60% of all rivers in China receive this same recommendation of no human contact, with the water in about half of these 60% still allowed for use by industry and for irrigation.⁴² There is no comparison to be made with Canada or the U.S. in this regard. Despite these appalling reviews, several hundred million Chinese have no alternative and must utilize these sources. Although it is difficult to establish a causal link, the rates of stomach and liver cancer are 50% higher in rural China than in the country's major cities.⁴³

Environmental degradation in China goes well beyond air and water pollution, but air and water are key environmental indicators, which raise concerns elsewhere as they accumulate the effects of environmental degradation and are relatively easy to measure.⁴⁴ Based on China's scorecard in these two categories, environmental reform is going to become a necessity for the CPC in order to retain a supportive and healthy population. By addressing the environmental issues plaguing the population, the CPC will, as with the other factors discussed, inadvertently adopt a democratic solution, furthering the

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 73.

⁴² Ministry of Environmental Protection, "1995 – 2007. State of Environment Report," last accessed 09 May 2014, http://english.sepa.gov.cn/standards_reports/soe/.

⁴³ The World Bank, *Cost of Pollution in China*, (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2007), 7.

⁴⁴ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Key Environmental Indicators, Organization for Economic Development and Co-Operation*, (Paris France, 2008), 8.

states fall into democracy. The cracks in China's foundation are significant, crossing political, social, economic, and environmental domains. Yet the gains achieved by China over the past 30 years have been unprecedented.

Politically, the CPC has led China from a backwards agrarian nationalist state to become the world's largest economic exporter in less than 65 years. The government ideology has repeatedly transformed to meet China's rising status, from Marxist communism, and Mao socialism to the most recent iteration of *socialism with Chinese characteristics*. Yet these expressed changes have had little impact on the internal structure and power distribution of the CPC, which still governs with an iron fist. Opposition to the CPC is quickly dealt with and although the CPC does allow controlled democracy to occur at the lowest levels of Chinese society, it largely controls the environment and the candidates, making any choice a CPC choice. Corruption within the CPC, a consequence of a unipolar government without opposition, has resulted in an increased divide between the prosperous and the destitute. Crackdowns on corruption by the CPC government only address the symptoms of the disease allow it to return or mutate. This cannot continue in an increasingly conscious society as awareness, education and entitlements are expanded with economic progress. The CPC will need to adopt increasingly democratic practices to maintain state development.

Socially, China has seen the reform of the social welfare system from a state provision of universal services to a mix of privatization of complete privatization of services. While this has been a prosperous move economically for the CPC, it has had significant negative impacts on the Chinese population who can no longer afford the welfare service or do not meet the criteria for provision. Further, with the reduction in

SOE's and privatization, Chinese citizens are going unemployed as efficiency is introduced to a previously inefficient state-run system. Health care is one of the main social welfare services impacted by privatization of a reduction in state sponsored funding. This has a direct impact on Chinese citizens who must finance the delta required to retain the service. One extreme example of gap financing is with the practitioners of *Falun Gong*, who are being arrested and organ harvested for profit to subsidize and often benefit the privatized health care services. China has also begun a recession in labour as the one child policy has caught up with the population. This recession in labour will quickly translate into a drain on social services as the population continues to age and China experiences the inverted pyramid effect where there are more elderly than there are people to take care of them. In order to address these social issues, China will need to relinquish its authoritarian response and adopt democratic practices to find a balance that provides equitable services to its incredibly diverse and demographically unique population.

Economically, China continues to impress the world as the largest exporter and possibly largest global economy. China's incredible GDP growth has been constant at around 10% for nearly 30 years, but it has finally started a downturn and is expected to continue dropping into the future. It is expected that this drop will have significant consequences on the Chinese population as they are exploited to maintain China's GDP growth and economic reform ambitions. Inequality has become extreme in China with a Gini coefficient measuring 47.4 indicating large discrepancies between the incomes of the wealthy and the poor. As the economy starts to slow, there is growing concern that civil unrest may increase which will pressure the CPC into action. The CPC will

continue efforts to rebalance the economic equality while maintaining economic progress. These efforts will require further concessions to be made, further supporting China's democratic slide.

Environmentally, a visual representation of the political, social and economic factors becomes evident in the water and the air pollution in China. Air pollution in China is amongst the worst in the world; requiring significant measures are implemented before the environment is considered safe enough to enter. Water pollution is just as severe affecting over 60 percent of the rivers in China whereby human contact is not recommended.

The CPC have amazed the world with the level of economic progress made over the past 30 years. While this progress has been astounding, it has come at incredible political, social, economic and environmental cost. The CPC can no longer afford to ignore these paramount concerns without detrimental effect. However, the manner in which the CPC addresses these issues can no longer be through authoritarian means. China today is not the China of 30 years ago. The people are diverse, educated, and powerful. Increasing concessions will need to be made by the CPC in order to maintain civil rest. These concessions will continue to strip the power from the CPC and empower the people, beginning the "slow fall to *democracy with Chinese characteristics*".

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